Georgios Mangini's (PhD)

Abstract: Hagia Koryphē (Jabal Mūsā) in Sinai, Egypt

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Chapter 1 deals with the aims, method and problems of the research, the toponymy and natural environment. Chapter 2 examines the Bedouin, the anchorites and their relationship. An analysis of the material record from and textual references to Hagia Koryphē in the Early Christian period follows. Chapter 3 delves into the building programme of emperor Justinian (mid-sixth century). It presents written sources on and describes the imperial foundations. Earlier research on the basilica of Hagia Koryphē and the programme's impact on locals are discussed. Chapter 4 covers the years between the 630s and 1822: the continuation of earlier ways of life and the changes due to the coming of Islam, the importance of Hagia Koryphē in Muslim tradition, the collapse of the summit basilica and the cult of Saint Catherine. The medieval period was dominated by the pilgrimage phenomenon and the patronage of Muslim rulers. In Ottoman times the Monastery was consolidated within Orthodox hierarchy and the era of pilgrimage ended. Chapter 5 examines the 'Mount of the Law controversy' and the scholarly, artistic and tourist phenomenon of nineteenth century Sinai. The Epilogue focuses on the future of Hagia Koryphē at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Hagia Koryphē (Jabal Mūsā) in Sinai, Egypt

by
Georgios Manginis

School of Oriental and African Studies
Department of Art and Archaeology

University of London

Submitted in accordance with the requirement
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2010

Declaration

I hereby declare that the work presented in the thesis is my own.

Georgios Manginis

May 2010

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The present thesis examines the history of Hagia Koryphē, a mountain peak above the Monastery of Saint Catherine at South Sinai. It has been known for centuries as 'Mount Sinai,' the place where Moses received the Law from God, as described in *Exodus*. The thesis explores the ways in which the landscape of Hagia Koryphē was experienced and transformed, using textual criticism, historical analysis, art historical appreciation and, for the first time, archaeological interpretation. The narrative begins in the third century *AD*, when the identification of the Biblical 'Mount Sinai' with Hagia Koryphē was made, and extends to World War I.

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"'But good heavens, man!' the Colonel suddenly exploded. 'That's all been done before! Every inch of it! Mount Sinai! Everybody's Mount Sinai!'
'Yes, sir!' I hastened. 'That's rather the point of it, in a way.'
'But what original ideas have you on the subject? Don't you see? Mustn't write a book like this without having original ideas!'
[...]
'But now and again you get the impression, for instance, that a scholar is trying to build up a new theory, not because he really believes in it, but merely because he wants to upset the theory of the man in front of him.'
'Darn good thing!' the Colonel endorsed. 'Makes books worth writing.'
'And another thing. When you actually get on the spot, you sometimes realize for the first time the fellow's never been there. And never hinted that he's been there, either.'
'Who?'
'I mean the scholar, the one who's put out such a clever theory about such-and-such a place.'
'A clever theory's better than a foolish theory,' said the Colonel sternly."

Colonel Smith, at the dining room
of the Bel Air hotel in Suez.
Louis Golding, *In the Steps of Moses the Lawgiver*, London 1938, viii-ix.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Scope of the thesis and previous research

The present thesis examines the history of Hagia Koryphē (Jabal Mūsā), a mountain peak in Egypt's desert peninsula of Sinai towering above the Monastery of Saint Catherine. Hagia Koryphē has been known for centuries as 'Mount Sinai,' the place where the prophet Moses met God and received the Law, as described in the book of *Exodus*. The identification was first made around the third century *AD* and this is the beginning of the thesis' narrative which extends to the outbreak of World War I. Written sources and archaeological remains are used to explore the ways in which the landscape of Hagia Koryphē was experienced and transformed.

In 1998 an excavation was organised at the site (for details of the project, see section 6.1). The author was the site co-director and studied the post-seventh-century pottery material. The excavation brought to light a sixth-century basilical church, dated by comparison to the Monastery church to the time of the emperor Justinian I (483-565, ruled 527-565, see section 3.3). Sources helped narrow the date between 560 and 565. Previously unknown remains of an earlier church, built according to sources between 360 and 367, survived underneath the basilica (section 2.3). The agreement between the textual and the archaeological record was remarkable.

By the time the excavation was finished in October 1999, the succession of building phases at Hagia Koryphē had been established. However, few questions as to the importance of the site for the people who inhabited it, visited it and

worshipped in it had either been asked or answered. Their testimony has survived in numerous historical texts, pilgrim or travel accounts and inscriptions. Hagia Koryphē's importance could only be grasped through a comprehensive study of these testimonies in conjunction with the archaeological finds.

Even though the archaeological remains of Hagia Koryphē were first noted in the Middle Ages (section 3.3.1), no effort had been made to investigate them before the 1990s. Sinaitic studies had focused on different areas. Mid- to late nineteenth-century Biblical scholars 'discovered' the treasures of the Monastery's library (section 5.4). Lina Eckenstein and Kōnstantinos Amantos produced historical surveys giving precedence to western language and Greek language sources respectively.[1] Geōrgios and Maria Sōtēriou and Kurt Weitzmann proved the Monastery's icon collection to be the most important in the world.[2]

In recent years, Israel Finkelstein and Uzi Dahari published archaeological surveys of South Sinai but failed to incorporate the valuable monastic tradition into their discussions.[3] Joseph J. Hobb's book examined Horeb[4] through an environmental and anthropological lens.[5] In the last decade researchers delved into medieval and post-medieval Arabic and Greek sources previously ignored by western scholarship, but their outlook remained limited in scope.[6]

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[1] Eckenstein 1921; Amantos 1953.
[2] Sōtēriou & Sōtēriou 1956; Sōtēriou & Sōtēriou 1958; see the various articles by Weitzmann collected in Weitzmann 1982a; see also Weitzmann & Ševčenko 1982.
[3] Finkelstein 1981; Finkelstein 1985; Finkelstein 1992; Dahari 1993; Dahari 2000.
[4] On place names, see section 1.4.
[5] Hobbs 1995.
[6] See articles collected in Mouton 2001a; see also Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006; Popescu-Belis 2000; Popescu-Belis & Mouton 2006. Until recently it seemed that two separate viewpoints were taken when approaching Sinaitic medieval history, a 'Greek' one based on monastic tradition and

However, none of these studies focused on Hagia Koryphē or attempted an integrated approach of the material and written records over the site's bimillennial history. This is the aim of the thesis at hand. Its approach is interdisciplinary, using textual criticism, archaeological interpretation, historical analysis and art historical appreciation to create a 'biography,'[7] to record the 'life' of the place. The pattern of this 'life' is organic: periods of growth were followed by quiet spells, times of commotion preceded peaceful centuries. Hagia Koryphē's 'biography' follows this pattern and focuses on periods of activity: the fourth century, the mid-sixth century, the early seventh century, the early eleventh century, the early sixteenth century and the nineteenth century. These are the 'turning points' which mark major changes of the site's history (Table 1 in section 1.3).

To facilitate further discussion, a brief historical summary will be given here. Hagia Koryphē rose from obscurity in the Early Christian period[8] – in contrast to other Holy Land sites with pagan cultic tradition. It was originally marginal in character, the refuge of persecuted ascetics, but it soon became one of the most important pilgrimage destinations across Christendom, chiefly thanks to its inclusion in the Holy Land building programme of Justinian. A basilica was built on the summit and another one within a fortress at its foot (later to become the Monastery of Saint Catherine), alongside visitor facilities and defensive structures. After the Muslim conquest of the 630s, adherents of the new faith

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a 'Latin' one based on western pilgrimage accounts. This discrepancy was addressed in the work of these scholars.

[7] On the use of the term 'biography,' see Casey 1998: 230; Tilley 1994: 25, 34.

[8] The following terms have been used for periods of Byzantine history: Early Christian (early fourth to late sixth century), Early Byzantine (late sixth to mid-ninth century), Middle Byzantine (mid-ninth

followed Christian tradition and paid respect to the Biblical site, even adding a mosque on the summit after the basilica's collapse.

By the late Middle Ages three religions (Christianity, Islam and Judaism) had acknowledged Hagia Koryphē as one of their sacred places and had included it in their pilgrimage itineraries. Its landmarks and lore had already crystallised and the ways of approaching and experiencing it were set. However, nineteenth-century visitors, keen on scientific enquiry and Biblical scholarship, questioned the identification of the place with the 'Mount of the Law.' The late nineteenth and the twentieth century obscured the site even further, since scholars concentrated on the treasures of the Monastery rather than the ruins of Hagia Koryphē. Nonetheless, the pilgrimage tradition survived and continues to this day.

1.2. Limitations

Covering two millennia of a place's history is hardly an easy task, even when only excavated material is available and little or no textual evidence remains. The extensive literature on Hagia Koryphē complicates its study even further, while opening up ways of interpretation impossible without it. The limitations and problems of the textual and archaeological records will now be briefly discussed.

The few sparsely populated square kilometres of the South Sinai mountain cluster have been described in texts written in Latin, Greek, Arabic, Armenian, Italian, French, English, Turkish, German, Czech, Swedish, Flemish and a few other languages since the fourth century. Hundreds of inhabitants and visitors have

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century to 1204), Late Byzantine (1204-1453) and Post-Byzantine (1453 to early nineteenth century).

compiled accounts of their experiences, mentioning Hagia Koryphē either briefly or at length. This volume of literature usually includes the Monastery and several adjacent sites, too. It would not be possible to cover all these sources in detail, neither to examine other places in a word-limited thesis. Attention is given to passages which deal with Hagia Koryphē and other sites are only referred to when necessary. Little-studied post-medieval Greek texts produced by the Sinaitic brethren are particularly interesting as they represent the usually ignored monastic tradition.

The sources originate from many cultures, cover a considerable length of time, fall within the limits of different genres and answer to various needs and priorities. Given the aim of the thesis at hand, some texts are approached from particular viewpoints and some are omitted altogether. Repetitions and silence on certain subjects are compensated for by either rigorous editing or questioning of the available evidence, often bringing together the textual and material record.

An essential contribution of this thesis is the inclusion, for the first time, of archaeological data in the discussion of Hagia Koryphē. The few studies on the architecture of its sixth-century basilica (section 3.3.1) were not preceded by excavation. Therefore they only speculated on issues of morphology and ignored earlier buildings. Systematic research on Hagia Koryphē allowed for an unprecedented familiarity with the place and provided more groups of finds (pottery, glass, inscriptions etc.) against which hypotheses could be tested.

Nonetheless, the archaeological record has limitations, too. The erection of the 1934 chapel of Hagia Triada and landscaping projects in the 1970s resulted in serious disturbances of the stratigraphy, with most deposits razed to the natural

bedrock and great quantities of soil reused as fill in modern terraces. Rarely did any strata appear to be uncontaminated and hardly ever did they yield datable finds. Building material had been scattered around the foot of the summit after the collapse of the basilica. Finally, pottery finds were often smashed beyond identification, rarely allowing for shapes or even diagnostic parts. The nature of the finds, a haphazard accumulation that came to be broken on Hagia Koryphē after long journeys from distant destinations, made the typological variations so broad and diverse that few patterns of traffic or use can be established. The site seems like a Noah's Ark of European and Near and Middle Eastern material culture: two specimens of each kind – and not much of any.

A final limitation is due to the nature of archaeological research. Groups of finds (architecture, amphorae, glazed pottery, inscriptions, glass etc.) were examined by different specialists, who are at various stages of completion at the time of writing (summer 2009). The first study to be concluded, on the glazed pottery and the lamps, was submitted in September 2000 as a Master of Arts dissertation at the School of Oriental and African Studies by the author of the present thesis.[9] Just general accounts have been published and only these could be used.[10] The excavation ground-plans have not been finalised either, therefore the drawings included here date from the early years of the project and have been modified by the writer.

Preliminary reports and personal communications cannot substitute for scholarly publications. However, every research project has to be content with what is available

[9] Briefly discussed in Manginis 2000.
[10] Panagiōtidē *et al.* 2002: 69-73, 75-7; Kalopissi-Verti 2006: 279-80.

and compensate for what is missing. As much effort as possible has been made to weave archaeological information and textual testimonies into a coherent narrative.

1.3. Outline

The thesis is structured in six chapters, each separated into sections. Chapter 1 deals with the aims, method and problems of the research (already discussed, see sections 1.1 and 1.2), trying to create a framework upon which later chapters will develop. It addresses questions of toponymy (section 1.4 and Table 2) and describes the natural setting of Horeb (section 1.5). Table 1 summarises the 'ages' of Hagia Koryphē's history, separated by six 'turning points.'[11] Chapter 2 covers the pre-Justinianic years focusing on the populations of the area, the Bedouin (section 2.1) and the anchorites (section 2.2)[12] and on their relationship during the Early Christian period (section 2.2.1). An analysis of the material record from and textual references to Hagia Koryphē during these early centuries follows (sections 2.3 and 2.4 respectively).

Chapter 3 delves into the brief period between the Justinianic building programme (mid-sixth century) and the Muslim conquest (630s). It presents written sources on the imperial foundations (section 3.1) before describing the Wādī 'l-Dayr buildings and the Hagia Koryphē complex (sections 3.2 and 3.3 respectively). Earlier research on the latter is also examined (section 3.3.1). The programme's impact on the Horeb populations is discussed in section 3.4.

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[11] Boundaries between 'eras' are not fixed and some issues are discussed when the argument invites it.
[12] The term 'anchorite' is for hermits, even when they practised some form of community life. The term 'monk' is reserved for members of an organised monastery.

Table 1. 'Ages' of Hagia Koryphē's history.

HAGIA KORYPHĒ	DATES	EGYPTIAN HISTORY	THIS THESIS
Pre-Christian period	prehistory to third century *AD*	prehistory to Roman period (until *AD* 330)	Section 2.1
TURNING POINT 1: Coming of anchorites to South Sinai (third to early fourth century)			
Early Christian period	third to mid-sixth century	Early Christian period	Sections 2.2 to 2.4
TURNING POINT 2: Justinianic building project (mid-sixth century)			
Justinianic / Early Byzantine period	mid-sixth century to 630s	Early Christian and Early Byzantine periods	Chapter 3
TURNING POINT 3: Islamic conquest (630s)			
Early Islamic period	630s to eleventh century	patriarchal caliphs, Umayyad, ᶜAbbāsid, Ṭūlūnid and early Fāṭimid periods	Section 4.1
TURNING POINT 4: Beginning of Muslim and 'Latin' patronage (1010-1030s)			
Age of Pilgrimage	eleventh century to 1517	late Fāṭimid, Ayyūbid and Mamlūk periods	Section 4.2
TURNING POINT 5: Ottoman conquest of Egypt (1517)			
Ottoman period	1517 to 1822	Ottoman Egypt (1517-1805)	Section 4.3
TURNING POINT 6: J. L. Burckhardt, *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land* (published 1822)			
Age of Enquiry	1822 to early twentieth century	Modern Egypt (after 1805)	Chapter 5

Chapter 4 touches upon aspects of Sinaitic history between the 630s and the beginning of the 'Mount of the Law controversy' in the 1820s: the importance of Hagia Koryphē in Muslim tradition (section 4.1), the continuation of earlier ways of life (section 4.1.1) but also the changes due to the coming of Islam (section 4.1.2) and to the collapse of the Hagia Koryphē basilica (section 4.1.3). The introduction of Saint Catherine to the Sinaitic pantheon (section 4.1.4) marks the beginning of the medieval period which is dominated by the pilgrimage phenomenon (sections

4.2.2 and 4.2.3) and the patronage of Muslim rulers, officials and pilgrims (section 4.2.1). Finally, the Ottoman period, characterised by the consolidation of the Monastery of Saint Catherine within the Christian Orthodox hierarchy (section 4.3.3), also marks the end of the pilgrimage era (section 4.3.2).

Chapter 5 examines the nineteenth-century rage for all things Sinaitic, either in the guise of the 'Mount of the Law controversy' (sections 5.1 and 5.2) or as a religious (section 5.3), scholarly (section 5.4), artistic (section 5.5) and tourist (section 5.6) phenomenon. The epilogue (Chapter 6) recapitulates main points and touches upon the future of Hagia Koryphē at the beginning of the twenty-first century (section 6.1). Appendix I gathers the original versions of texts translated into English in the body of the thesis and Appendix II lists names and dates of visitors to Horeb.

1.4. Toponymy

Since most of the sources on Hagia Koryphē are in Greek and the longest-living tradition in the area is preserved by the Greek-speaking monks of the Monastery of Saint Catherine, Greek place names are mostly used.[13] They are older than the corresponding Arabic ones, which follow Early Christian Biblical identifications.[14] When no Greek place name exists, the Arabic one is used. A list of the main place names appears in Table 2 and preferred names are marked in bold letters.[15]

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[13] On Sinaitic place names, see Greenwood 1997: xi-xii, 4. As Georges Bénédite (1891: 1) noted, Sinaitic toponymy is basically oral, therefore it has no fixed characteristics. A place may have several names, whereas a name can be applied to several places. On Sinaitic nomenclature, see Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 26-7, 51, 273-308. Greek personal names of historical personalities and place names outside Sinai are given in the form used in the *ODB*.

[14] Hobbs 1995: 198-9.

[15] A similar table bringing together contemporary Arabic names and traditional identifications of sites appears in Dahari 2000: 156-7, table 6.

Table 2. Sinaitic place names.

Greek	Arabic	Hebrew	Notes
Hagia Aikaterinē (Ἁγία Αἰκατερίνη)	Jabal Kathrin (جبل كاثرين)		The tallest mountain of Sinai, altitude 2,641 m.[16] Figures 3, 6, 7, 13, 29, 108, 111, 113, 136.
Hagia Epistēmē (Ἁγία Ἐπιστήμη)	Jabal al-Dayr (جبل الدير)		Mountain to the north of Wādī ʾl-Dayr. Figures 3, 7, 11, 12 and 139.
Hagia Koryphē (Ἁγία Κορυφή)	Jabal Mūsā (جبل موسى)		'Holy Summit.' Summit of Horeb, altitude 2,285 m. Its location is 28 32 18·39 N latitude and 33 58 26·03 E longitude.[17] Several figures.
Hagia Zōnē (Ἁγία Ζώνη)	Raʾs Ṣafṣāfa (رأس صفصافة)		The northern 'brow' of Horeb, altitude 2,168 m. Figures 3, 4, 7, 106, 140, 147, 148.
Hagioi Tessarakonta (Ἅγιοι Τεσσαράκοντα)	Dayr al-Arbaʿīn (دير الاربعين)		Garden and small priory, *kathisma*, in Wādī al-Lajāʾ. Figures 3, 4, 7, 28 and 29.
Hagioi Theodōroi (Ἅγιοι Θεόδωροι)	Jabal Muʾtamr (جبل مؤتمر)		Conical hill at the foot of Horeb, at the head of Wādī ʾl-Dayr, altitude 1,854 m. Figures 4, 7, 17, 107 and 113.
		Horeb (חֹרֵב)	Mountain to the south of Wādī ʾl-Dayr, including Hagia Koryphē, Jabal Faraʾ, Prophētēs Helias and Hagia Zōnē. Several figures.
	Jabal Faraʾ (جبل فرا)		Low peak on Horeb, to the west of Hagia Koryphē. Figures 3, 4 and 27.
	Jabal Muʾtamr (جبل مؤتمر)		Low hill in the Pharan oasis area with a Nabatean peak sanctuary. It is often encountered as 'Jabal Munayjah.' Figures 24 and 25.
	Jabal Sirbāl (جبل سربال)		Mountain near the Pharan oasis, altitude 2,070 m. Figures 105 and 138.

[16] Altitudes vary considerably between publications. The most recent available measurements have been used.
[17] Ball 1916: 36.

Greek	Arabic	Hebrew	Notes
Pharan (Φαράν)	Wādī Fīran (وادى فيران)		Oasis valley to the west of Horeb. Figure 24 and 138.
Prophētēs Hēlias (Προφήτης Ἡλίας)	Farsh Elias (فرش إلياس)		Basin at the foot of Hagia Koryphē, on Horeb, where a chapel of the prophet Elijah is located, altitude 1,900 m. Figures 3, 4, 7, 11, 130 and 131.
	al-Rāḥa (الراحة)		Plain to the north of Horeb. Figures 3, 7, 140 and 147.
Raithō (Ῥαιθώ)	Ṭūr (الطور)		Town and port on the Gulf of Suez with a major Sinaitic priory, *metochion*. Figure 45.
		Sinai (סיני)	The peninsula of Sinai. Figures 1, 2, 71 and 115.
	Wādī ʾl-Dayr (وادى الدير)		Narrow valley inside which the Monastery stands, between Horeb and Hagia Epistēmē. Figures 3, 4, 7, 12, 18, 27, 28, 31, 109, 122, 132 and 139.
	Wādī al-Lajāʾ (وادى اللجا)		Narrow valley to the west of Horeb. Figures 3, 4, 7, 27, 28 and 29.

Within the thesis the name 'Sinai' refers to the peninsula of Sinai. 'Mount Sinai' is not used to denote either the summit of Hagia Koryphē or the mountain it crowns (which is called Horeb), but the Biblical 'Mount of the Law' in its textual manifestation. Horeb is a mountain cluster which includes the summits of Hagia Koryphē and Hagia Zōnē and the basin of Prophētēs Hēlias and is bordered by Wādī ʾl-Dayr.[18] However, 'Sinai,' 'Jabal Mūsā' and 'Mount Sinai' have often been used

[18] F. Nau noted that 'Horeb' was originally the name of the mountain up to Prophētēs Hēlias and 'Sinai' from there upwards; however, in his days the name was given to an adjacent peak on the same cluster (perhaps Hagia Zōnē); see Anastase 1902b: 9 note 2, 32-3 note 3. Correspondingly, Israeli archaeologists adopted the names 'Horeb' for Hagia Zōnē and 'Mount Sinai' for Hagia Koryphē; see Finkelstein 1981: 81; Tsafrir 1993c: 316; Finkelstein 1993: 334. This formula was

interchangeably in texts to describe what here is referred to as 'Horeb.'[19] Eusebios identified Horeb in his work *On (Place)names* (*Onomastikon*):[20]

> 'Horeb (Dt 1:2); mount of God in the land of Madian; near mount Sinai over Arabia in the desert.' **(Text I)**[21]

Interestingly, Hieronymus' Latin translation of the *On (Place)names* commented on the confusion between 'Horeb' and 'Sinai' in the Greek original, suggesting that they were two place names used for the same mountain.[22] Evidently, the confusion dates back to the fourth century and one of its earliest victims was the mid-sixth-century Piacenza pilgrim, who probably considered Horeb to be the adjacent mountain of Hagia Epistēmē (section 2.4.5).[23]

When the terms 'Monastery' and '(Justinianic) fortress' are used, reference is intended to the Monastery of Saint Catherine in Wādī 'l-Dayr, at the foot of Horeb (several figures). However, the dedication to Saint Catherine occurred centuries after a fortress with a basilical church (*katholikon*[24]) and some facilities within its walls were built (figures 19, 32, 36, 38, on the dedication see section 4.1.4). It soon became an organised monastery (late sixth to early seventh century,

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also used by some early travellers; see Pococke 1814: 285-6.

[19] Palmer 1871: 118; Eckenstein 1921: 119-20; Aharoni 1961: 164-5. It could be that 'Horeb' was a name for the Mount of the Law in later Biblical traditions; see Herrmann 1975: 71-2; Vaux 1978a: 426-7.

[20] Author's translation. On the '(desert of) Sin,' see Eusebius 1966: 172, 152; Kerkeslager 1998: 197-9; Briend 2003: 2080-1. The connection of the mountain with the land of Madian survived until the thirteenth century, when Yāqūt 'al-Rūmī' (1179-1229) repeated it in his geographical dictionary (*circa* 1225; for the passage, see Le Strange 1890: 73; for Yāqūt, see Le Strange 1890: 8-9). Probably Yāqūt was quoting Eusebios or a work after him and obviously had not visited Sinai himself. The same must be true of Abu'l-Fida' (1273-1331), who must have followed Yāqūt or a common source; see Abulfeda 1712: 73-4.

[21] Bold Latin numerals correspond to entries in Appendix I, giving the original versions of texts quoted in English translation within the body of the thesis.

[22] For Hieronymus (Saint Jerome), see Eusebius 1966: 173. Wilkinson 1977: 1-2; Briend 2003: 2082-3.

[23] For a recent discussion of the Horeb-Sinai issue, see Briend 2003: 2059-61.

[24] On the Post-Byzantine term '*katholikon*,' see Kiefer & Loerke 1991.

see section 3.4). Therefore, in chapter 3, it will simply be referred to as 'the (Justinianic) fortress' while 'the Monastery' will be used in references to it after the late sixth / early seventh century.

1.5. Natural setting

This section will selectively review the results of two centuries of scientific research on the environment of Horeb (on the history of the research, see section 1.5.1), presenting the natural landscape and the possibilities it offered to its inhabitants. The geology (section 1.5.2), geomorphology (section 1.5.3), climate, flora and fauna (section 1.5.4) will be examined.[25]

1.5.1. Early scientific research in South Sinai

The first four geological studies on Sinai were published by Eduard Rüppell (German, 1794-1884, visited Horeb in May 1822, April 1826 and May 1831, at Hagia Koryphē on 7 May 1831, figure 100),[26] Captain Newbold (British, visited Horeb probably in June 1847),[27] John Hogg[28] (British) and Oscar Fraas (German, 1824-1897).[29] Their efforts were followed by the systematic work of the London-based Palestine Exploration Fund, included in the volumes by Charles William

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[25] For brief overviews of scientific and scholarly research, see Rothenberg 1979a: 7-8; Hobbs 1995: 243-4.

[26] For observations in the Monastery of Saint Catherine in May 1822 and April 1826, see Rüppell 1829: 257-64, 292, 329-34; for altitudes and latitude / longitude of summits, see Rüppell 1838: 114-25; Rüppell 1840: 441-4. On his mission, see Kurz & Linant de Bellefonds 1998: 68-9; Kurz & Linant de Bellefonds 2000: 154.

[27] Newbold 1847: mainly 47-52, with scattered further notes of a geological nature.

[28] John Hogg merely quoted works by Newbold and John Kitto (the latter never visited Sinai and made several misidentifications), see Hogg 1850a; Hogg 1850b; Hogg 1850c (quoting Kitto 1848: 51-8, 69-70 and Newbold 1847).

Wilson (1836-1905) and Henry Spencer Palmer (1838-1893), published in 1871, and Edward Hull (Irish, 1829-1917, visiting Horeb on 19-22? November 1883, at the summit on the 20th), published after 1885.[30] This *Ordnance Survey of the Peninsula of Sinai*, with further essays by Frederick Whitmore Holland, Joseph Dalton Hooker (1817-1911), Claude W. Wyatt, George Robert Crotch (1842-1874) and Edward T. Wilson (1832-1918), was the earliest general scientific study of the area touching on geography, geology, geomorphology, climate, plant and animal life (figure 110).[31] The publication was complemented by three volumes of photographs, of which volume I contains several plates of Horeb.[32] (The *Ordnance Survey* will also be examined in section 5.2.4, with regard to the 'Mount of the Law controversy.') Henry S. Palmer gave a concise account of the expedition in a book published the same year[33] and repeated its conclusions in a popular edition reprinted several times.[34]

More topographical and geological accounts (sprinkled with random botanical and zoological notes) on Southeast and Southwest Sinai by the British investigators W. F. Hume and T. Barron were published in 1906 and 1907, both based in the *Ordnance Survey* triangulation mapping.[35] The former conducted research further to the east of Horeb and mentioned it only briefly.[36] During and after World War I,

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[29] Fraas 1867: 21-6.
[30] Hull 1885: 51-7, 186-8; Hull 1886: 24-7, 33-43. On H. S. Palmer, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 247; on C. W. Wilson, see Moscrop 2000: 54-8; Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 250.
[31] Wilson & Palmer 1869 (actually published in 1871): part I, especially 17-32, 217-72; for details of the project, see Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 33-52; on the work of the Fund and especially the 1868-1869 Sinai survey, see Moscrop 2000: 80-3.
[32] Wilson & Palmer 1869: part III, volume I, 12-4, 16-60, especially 33-8, 40, 42-4, 54, 59 for Hagia Koryphē.
[33] For the Horeb area, see Palmer 1871: 56-145.
[34] Palmer 1878; Palmer 1892.
[35] Murray 1953: 152-3. On G. W. Murray (1885-1966), see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 246.
[36] Hume 1906: 94-5, plates XII (a+b).

German, British and Egyptian scholars undertook surveys mainly motivated by a search for oil, which proved successful only after 1947 although drilling had begun in 1908.[37] The most detailed geomorphological study of the South Sinai Massif remains the one by Hassân Awad.[38] Survey work culminated in an intensive Israeli research programme during that country's occupation of Sinai (after 1967).[39]

One of the first studies of the fauna and flora of the area is to be found in the *Ordnance Survey*.[40] The British national Henry Chichester Hart visited Hagia Koryphē and Hagia Aikaterinē on November 20, 1883.[41] W. F. Hume listed plants from the whole of Sinai.[42] George E. Post's work was a comprehensive study of the flora of Sinai.[43] J. R. Shabetai made a further significant contribution to the botanology of the area around Horeb,[44] along with Friedrich S. Bodenheimer, A. Schatzmayr and C. Koch, who also provided insights into the insect fauna of South Sinai.[45] For mosquitoes in particular, close acquaintances of regular visitors, H. H. Salem's monograph remains useful.[46] Much of the information in following sections comes from the 1997 book on the physical geography of the Sinai by Ned H. Greenwood.[47]

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[37] For example: For West-Central Sinai, see Ball 1916. For oil research, see Beadnell 1927: 3; Murray 1953: 151 note 3; Kamil 1991: 13. The 'mountain of oil' was first mentioned by R. Pococke in 1743 (visited Sinai in 1739), see Pococke 1814: 284. 'Mountain oil' was seen by J. L. Burckhardt in 1816; see Burckhardt 1822: 468-9.
[38] Awad 1951: especially 157-9.
[39] Arad & Bartov 1981: introduction, with an exhaustive bibliography on the geological research in Sinai up to 1980. For older but thorough geological bibliography, see Avnimelech 1965: 140, 176-80; Avnimelech 1969: 152-4.
[40] Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 247-68 (by J. D. Hooker and C. W. Wyatt).
[41] Hart 1891: 18-21, 123-49 (for the flora), 175-85 (for insects), 209-11 (for reptiles), 215-30 (for birds) and 233-8 (for mammals).
[42] Hume 1906: 207-33.
[43] Post 1932; Post 1933 (a revised and enlarged edition of Post 1896).
[44] Shabetai 1940.
[45] Bodenheimer & Theodor 1929; Schatzmayr 1936; Koch 1936.
[46] Salem 1938. See also Field 1952: 74-5.
[47] Greenwood 1997: 11-25, 26-50, 104-13.

1.5.2. Geology

Sinai is a triangular peninsula situated between the continents of Africa and Asia and covering an area of approximately 60,000 sq. km.[48] A Dune Sheet covers its Mediterranean coastline. To its south spread the Insular Massifs and the al-Tīh Plateau, surrounded by the Suez Foreshore to the northwest and the Dead Sea Drainage to the northeast. A zone of Dividing Valleys rises towards the South Sinai Massif, at the centre of the southern tip of the peninsula and bordered by the coastal Plain of Qā′ to the southwest and the Aqaba Foreshore to the southeast (figure 2).[49]

The South Sinai Massif, where Hagia Koryphē is situated, was formed during the late Precambrian epoch (620-580 million years BP). During the Carboniferous period of the Palaeozoic era (360-320 million years BP) it was the only emergent part of the present-day peninsula. By the Pleistocene period of the Quaternary era (two million years BP) most of what is seen on maps today had emerged.[50]

The red crystalline mountains of South Sinai are geologically closer to the Red Sea mountains[51] of Africa than to the Ḥijāz mountains of Arabia.[52] They were originally covered with sediments which slowly eroded and exposed the ancient granite core.[53] The main geological deposits of the area within a 20 km radius around Hagia Koryphē include granite (the majority of surrounding mountains consist of it), andesite (in Hagia Aikaterinē), basalt and dolerite, diorite, gneiss and pebble gravels

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[48] For an introduction to South Sinai geography with good images, see Garfunkel 1979a: 41-51, 46-8.
[49] Kamil 1991: 7-8; Briend 2003: 1973-5.
[50] For a geological history of the peninsula, see Garfunkel 1979b: 61-7; for a detailed history of plate tectonics, see Greenwood 1997: 11-9 and table 2-1.
[51] The hue of these mountains gave Red Sea its name, see Greenwood 1997: 11.
[52] For the economic geology of the area, see Barron 1907: 205-12.
[53] Briend 2003: 1973-4.

in the *wādī* (dry water course) beds. The nearest limestone deposits are in Wādī 'l-Tarr and near the Gulf of Suez (40 and 60 km northwest of Hagia Koryphē respectively),[54] although small quantities have been located in Horeb and Pharan.[55]

1.5.3. Geomorphology

Although few deposits have gathered on the barren mountains of South Sinai, their relief has changed considerably through the action of rainwater drainage,[56] frost and snow.[57] Gorges were formed which separated mountains with distinct geological characteristics. The mountain mass of Horeb is approximately 3 km long (NW-SE) and 1.5 km wide (SW-NE). It was once a volcano and is presently a volcanic neck.[58] It borders on the 160 hectares-wide plain of al-Rāha to the north, from which the Wādī 'l-Dayr branches out around its northern edge. To the east, the low mountain of Hagioi Theodōroi dominates the skyline. From al-Rāha the Wādī al-Lajā' curves round the southern foot of Horeb.[59]

There are two high points on Horeb, the summit of Hagia Koryphē at 2,285 m and the 'brow' of Hagia Zōnē to the north. They are separated by the Prophētēs Hēlias basin,[60] where cypresses, well known to visitors of the past and present, are to

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[54] Barron 1907: 53, plate X.
[55] Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 230-1; Hobbs 1995: 14.
[56] The South Sinai Massif is separated in two areas according to drainage, one to the east (draining to the Gulf of Aqaba) and another to the west (draining to the Gulf of Suez), on either side of a central divide. Horeb drains to the west; see Greenwood 1997: 39-46.
[57] Barron 1907: 213; Awad 1951: 158-9.
[58] Hobbs 1995: 6; Dahari 2000: 3.
[59] For a description with measurements, see Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 110-7; for a thorough description of the Massif and revised altitudes, see Daumas 1951: 365-70; Dahari 2000: 25.
[60] For an excellent description of the basin and its archaeological remains, see Dahari 2000: 38-40.

be found growing (figures 11, 130 and 131).[61] The Horeb cluster is made up of red young plutonic rock (granite). However, the colour of the volcanic rock (granite) of Hagia Koryphē is gray, making it distinct from nearby peaks (figure 4).[62] The archbishop of Sinai Nikēphoros Marthalēs (died 1749, on the throne 1729-1749) in his *proskynētarion* (pilgrim guidebook) noted that Hagia Koryphē is 'blackened with smoke all over,' alluding to the supernatural phenomena associated with the 'Mount of the Law' in *Exodus* (sections 2.2, 2.4.3 and 2.4.6).[63]

On Hagia Koryphē itself, it is difficult to see beyond the structures themselves in order to understand what the original geomorphology was (figures 5 and 6). Furthermore, no detailed topographical plan of the summit exists at a scale that would allow a clear picture to emerge.[64] An approach to what the summit looked like before any changes were made will be attempted, using present buildings as landmarks. To this end, a ground-plan drawn before the 1998-1999 excavations is used (figure 8).[65]

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[61] The earliest photographs of one of these cypresses appear in Wilson & Palmer 1869: part III, volume I, 32. The species of these 'funereal' cypress trees, which also appear in the garden near the Monastery (Shabetai 1940: 45), is not native to Sinai and must have been imported from the Balkans or Asia Minor, probably in Early Christian times; see Hart 1891: 18; Post 1933: 800-1; Hobbs 1995: 19.

[62] Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 112, 220; Barron 1907: 67 (based on Wilson & Palmer 1869); Meistermann 1909: 148; Daumas 1951: 378. On the geology of the cluster, see Perevolotsky 1981: 335-6.

[63] Marthalēs 1710: no pagination. On Marthalēs, see Eckenstein 1921: 181; Popescu-Belis & Mouton 2006: 199. A century earlier (in October 1631), the same remark had been made by V. Stochove; see section 4.3.2; Stochove *et al.* 1975: 122. Stochove's text was plagiarised by his fellow traveller Gilles Fermanel (died in 1661); see Stochove *et al.* 1975: 123. On V. Stochove, see Saint-Génois 1846: volume II, 123; Labib 1961: 94. A similar reference also appeared in Nektarios' mid-seventeenth-century *Epitome* (section 4.3.3) and in a brief Greek description of Hagia Koryphē surviving in a sixteenth-century Mount Athos manuscript; see Nektarios 1980: 50; *Proskynētaria* 2003: 139.

[64] The best topographical maps of Horeb remain the two by C. W. Wilson and H. S. Palmer (1869: part II, 'Mount Sinai – Outline' and 'Mount Sinai – Hill Shaded'), scale 1/10,560, with references to the Biblical passages above the place names in the first one. In the same work there is a series of section plans and a cursive ground-plan of the summit; see Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, plate VIII, figure 1; see also section 3.3.1.1.

[65] The final topographical and architectural plans of the excavation have not yet been completed.

The eastern and southern slopes of Hagia Koryphē are very steep, preventing ascent (figure 9). However, the northern and eastern slopes are relatively accessible and it was from here that visitors approached (and continue to approach) the place (figures 10, 17 and 18). On the summit, three rocky outcrops define its small area, separated by gaps that have more or less been filled in during building projects. One outcrop is still visible to the north of the *parakella* (auxiliary building, figure 8: B). Underneath it gapes cave B, where tradition reports that Moses hid in the presence of God (figure 8: O). The second outcrop is under the mosque (figure 8: C) and over another cave thought to have sheltered the prophet for forty days (cave A, figures 8: N, 14, 66 and 67).[66] This cave is today buried behind a passageway, but it was open to the winds on the southeastern face of the rock until the twentieth century (figures 13 and 136). A third outcrop is located south of the sanctuary of the chapel of Hagia Triada, relatively lower than the other two (figure 8: to the right of D).

The geomorphology of Horeb allows for five ascent routes.[67] Route A: from Wādī 'l-Dayr (near the Monastery) through a ravine to Prophētēs Hēlias and then up the northern side of Hagia Koryphē (figures 15, 16, 125 and 126). Route B: from Wādī 'l-Dayr, past Hagioi Theodōroi and round the southeastern foot of the

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[66] Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 208, plate VIII, figure 1: I and II; Palmer 1871: 110-1. Many variations appear as to these identifications; see Lagrange 1897: 120. Some authors identified the remains of the vaulted cistern, to the south of the basilica (section 3.3, figure 8: D), as one of the caves of Moses; see Daumas 1951: 378. Both incidents are mentioned in *Exodus* (33: 21-2, 24: 18):

> "Then the Lord said, 'There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by.'" 'Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights.'

[67] Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 114-15, 207-9.

mountain to Prophētēs Hēlias (figures 17 and 18).[68] Route C: from Hagioi Tessarakonta in Wādī al-Lajā' round the southern side of (or over) Jabal Fara' and up the western slope of Hagia Koryphē (figures 10, 27 and 28). Route D: from the Wādī 'l-Dayr to Hagia Zōnē and then on to Prophētēs Hēlias.[69] Route E: from below Jabal Fara' towards Prophētēs Hēlias.[70]

Only routes A, B and C were regularly used by pilgrims and travellers. Route A is the traditional pilgrim path from the Monastery to Hagia Koryphē, the so-called 'Path of Moses.' It is set with approximately 3,000 steps leading up to Prophētēs Hēlias whilst another 700 continue up to Hagia Koryphē.[71] On its lower part the path is crowned by two arches built of dressed stone. The first is called the Gateway of Confession (figure 15) and the second the Gateway of Saint Stephen (figure 16).[72] The second arch bears a sixth- or seventh-century inscription which provides a *terminus ante quem* for the path and probably referred to John 'Klimax,' a seventh-century abbot and writer (sections 2.2 and 3.4). The almost erased inscription reads:[73]

'+For the salvation of Abba Iohannes the Abbot and …' **(Text II)**

The fact that the pilgrim Egeria did not go up that way in 383 (section 2.4.1) gives a probable *terminus post quem* for its construction.[74]

Route B, 'Path of the Pasha,' was created by ᶜAbbās Pasha (1812-1854, ruled 1849-1854).[75] It leads up to the Prophētēs Hēlias basin and is accessible to camels

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[68] For the first two routes and a third, modern one, see Greenwood 1997: 45-6.
[69] Daumas 1951: 372; this ascent route was improved in 1946.
[70] Daumas 1951: 373.
[71] Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 114-5; Barron 1907: 71 (quoting Wilson & Palmer 1869).
[72] Palmer 1871: 105-06; Daumas 1951: 372; Dahari 2000: 47.
[73] Ševčenko 1966: 257, 263.
[74] A sixth-century date is most frequently proposed; see *Egeria* 2008: 83.
[75] Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 115; Barron 1907: 71-2 (quoting Wilson & Palmer 1869); for the

(figures 17 and 18). Route C seems to have been the earliest one in use since it was taken by Egeria on the way to the summit. It probably fell into disuse as an ascent route before the sixth century, when the buildings in Wādī 'l-Dayr gave a definite orientation to the approach (section 2.5). However, visitors used it when they descended from Hagia Koryphē and continued to climb Hagia Aikaterinē.[76]

1.5.4. Climate, flora and fauna

Although the Horeb area is often described as a rough and desolate desert, research has proved it to be a moderately hospitable environment.[77] 'The water supply [...] is among the most reliable of any area in Sinai.'[78] The average cloud-free time is seventy per cent, making rainfall a welcomed eventuality which appears with considerable variability. There is a tradition among the monks of the Monastery that before the chapel of Hagia Triada was erected on Hagia Koryphē in 1934, a waiting period of three years was necessary for the reservoir at the summit to replenish.[79]

However, when rain comes, the impermeable granite soil does not absorb water and floods occur, often with destructive results. Sometimes the precipitation

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history of the camel road and the palace of Jabal Qaṣr ᶜAbbās Pasha, to the west of Horeb, see Hamilton 1993: 15-8 (he visited Sinai in 1854, while the road was being built); Palmer 1871: 132-4; Barron 1907: 14; Eckenstein 1921: 185-6; Zachos 1937: 61-2; Daumas 1951: 221-2, 222 note, 372; Greenwood 1997: 46.

[76] Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 115; Barron 1907: 72 (quoting Wilson & Palmer 1869).

[77] For an early detailed description of Sinaitic climate, see Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 240-5. For an overview of the environmental conditions in Sinai from the late Pleistocene to this day (with an emphasis on North Sinai), see Goring-Morris 1987: volume I, 29-44. See also: Tsafrir 1993c: 316-8; Moustafa & Klopatek 1995; Briend 2003: 1975-6.

[78] Greenwood 1997: 45. The good water supply was already noted by nineteenth-century visitors; see Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 11-2, 113, 147; Barron 1907: 69-70 (based on Wilson & Palmer 1869); Daumas 1951: 365-6. The water of the central mountain region around Horeb is fresher than in other areas of South Sinai; see Zafrir *et al.* 1991: 124.

[79] A. Zachos in 1925 saw building material for the chapel waiting to be used when rain would come; see Zachos 1937: 69-71. On precipitation, see Hobbs 1995: 12-3.

of an entire year may occur within a few hours.[80] The Prophētēs Hēlias basin, at the foot of Hagia Koryphē, was turned into a shallow lake for a few months in October 1999, following heavy rainfall (section 2.2.1.1).[81] The mean annual precipitation is between 65 and 100 mm per year and even snowfall occurs. When it does, the snow remains on the ground from a few days to several weeks.[82]

Mean temperatures are moderate, ranging from 15.5° to 24° Celsius in the summer to 0° to 4° Celsius during winter,[83] while mean monthly relative humidity fluctuates between 33.3 and 57.9 per cent.[84] The climate of the Horeb area can be classed as 'desert mountains, mild to cool' (according to the Köppen climatic classification system),[85] being part of the Saharo-Arabian deserts. It is essential for understanding the habitation patterns in the area to realise that there is quite a lot of water in the form of springs, wells and even streams and that temperatures are mild.[86]

Furthermore, it seems that in earlier periods South Sinai was wetter than today. Wet conditions between 30,000 and 25,000 BP were followed by a period of aridity between 25,000 and 14,500 BP. The situation changed between 14,500 and 10,500 BP and, by the Neolithic period (10,500-6,500 BP/4,500 BC), annual rainfall was better distributed.[87] Favourable conditions must have continued into the Chalcolithic (6,500 BP/4,500 BC - 3,500 BC) and Early Bronze I (3,500-3,000 BC)

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[80] Perevolotsky 1981: 335.
[81] The gray granite of Hagia Koryphē is easily penetrated by water whereas the red granite of the Prophētēs Hēlias basin is impermeable; see Perevolotsky 1981: 335-6; Hobbs 1995: 7-8.
[82] Perevolotsky 1981: 335.
[83] H. C. Hart (1891: 20-1) found the mean annual temperature of Hagia Koryphē to correspond to that of London. On temperature, see Hobbs 1995: 11.
[84] Moustafa & Klopatek 1995: 387.
[85] Greenwood 1997: 51-64. For a general account of the climate, see Field 1952: 72; Hobbs 1995: 8-11.
[86] Hull 1886: 25-6; Meshel 2000: 146.
[87] Bar-Yosef 1982: 9; Greenwood 1997: 24.

periods, followed by increased desiccation in the Early Bronze II and III (3,000-2,400 BC), with a brief interval of wetter climate between 2,200 and 2,000 BC.[88]

During the two millennia of the Christian era conditions appear to have changed little although archaeological evidence bears testimony to a possible decrease in precipitation after the Early Christian period.[89] The introduction of goat herding might have contributed to the depletion of the vegetation cover.[90] Written sources stress the desertic aridity and poor agriculture of the Sinai.[91] Tellingly, the only two anchorites in the Sinaitic tradition who lived on trees as *dendrites* (an arboreal equivalent to *stylites*, anchorites living on columns) had to consecutively use the same tree because no other was available.[92]

However, as was mentioned before, the Horeb area is one of the better-watered parts of the peninsula. Intelligent water management systems must have helped in retaining rainwater and improving agricultural production, which – albeit on a small scale – was enough to cover the needs of the locals.[93] It seems that finding soil to plant in was a greater concern than finding water to irrigate.[94] Research has brought to light irrigation systems in the area.[95] They testify to a deep knowledge of the climate and its possibilities by both the Bedouin and the anchorites and to the self-supporting character of a developed yet closed economy.

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[88] Goldberg & Bar-Yosef 1982: 401-4.
[89] Dahari 1993: 350. For climatic changes in the Negev, see Nevo 1991: 4-5.
[90] Eckenstein 1921: 90-1.
[91] See the accounts of Kosmas (sixth century, see section 2.1), 'Nilos' (fourth to sixth century, see section 2.1), Theodoret (mid-fifth century, on Julian Saba who died in 367, see section 2.4.2) and Prokopios (*circa* 560, see section 2.4.4).
[92] Avraamios and his anonymous follower in the fourth century; see *Synaxis* 1998: 123-4, 134-5.
[93] A 350 sq. m orchard sufficed for a single monk; see Dahari 1993: 350. For cultivation in the Negev and for evidence in the Nessana papyri, see Evenari *et al.* 1982: 95-125. For an alternative theory, see Nevo 1991.
[94] Finkelstein 1993: 334, 336-7.

Today the vegetation cover remains substantial and flora is rich in xerophytic forms.[96] Abundant herbage and plentiful watering resources allow for comfortable pasturage of camels, sheep and goats.[97] The scope of agriculture is limited and concentrates on dates, grown in oases, and fruit and vegetable production in gardens, owned by the Monastery or the Bedouin and mainly tended by the latter (figure 29).[98]

The fauna of South Sinai is rich and diverse due to its position as a land-bridge between Asia and Africa.[99] The desiccation of the northern part of the peninsula isolated areas further south and promoted the development of endemics while attracting new species from the Levant and Africa. Although hunting has depleted the faunal diversity, the presence of species like ostriches and leopards was well documented in previous centuries. Gazelles, ibex, hyaenas, sand cats and wolves (or jackals) are rarely encountered, whereas foxes, hares and rodents are common. Birds include vultures, eagles, grackles, ravens, owls, wheatears and finches but it is partridges that dominate the landscape (and diet). Vipers, cobras, lizards and chameleons represent the reptiles while scorpions and galeodes stand out among arachnids. This varied and unique fauna was often mentioned in Early Christian anchoretic literature and later traveller accounts as accompanying, assisting or threatening humans who braved the 'terrible wilderness' of Sinai.

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[95] Finkelstein 1993: 334, 337, 340; Dahari 1993: 349-50.
[96] There are 419 plant species around Horeb, 27 of them endemic. The summit of Hagia Koryphē has a special alpine flora that does not appear below Prophētēs Hēlias; see Hobbs 1995: 16-21. For studies on the flora of the area, see Danin 1979: 77-83; Moustafa & Klopatek 1995: 387-94.
[97] Barron 1907: 70.
[98] Field 1952: 73-4.
[99] For recent overviews of Sinaitic fauna, see Tchernov 1979: 93-9; Hobbs 1995: 21-31.

2. HOLY WILDERNESS

> '[... Elijah] travelled for forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. [...]
>
> The Lord said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.'
>
> Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.'
>
> 1 *Kings* 19: 8-12

The Early Christian period during which the first Christian anchorites came to South Sinai was one of the most decisive moments in the history of Hagia Koryphē. Two places, a textual one ('Mount of the Law') and an actual one (Hagia Koryphē), were brought together and identified with each other. Biblical narratives were projected onto physical entities, the mountain became 'Mount Sinai,' the bush 'Burning Bush,' the caves had sheltered the prophets Moses and Elijah. The landscape of Horeb was invested with divine grace. The superimposition of patterns of human action – mostly cultic but connected to survival as well – created a stratigraphy of meaning. Written sources (section 2.4) and finds from archaeological excavations (section 2.3) will be combined to address questions on the life of the Bedouin (section 2.1), the anchorites (section 2.2) and the pilgrims and on the way they perceived and used the place they identified with the 'Mount of the Law' (section 2.5).

2.1. The people of the desert

An outline of the history of the people who inhabited South Sinai in general and the Horeb vicinity in particular from prehistory to the time when the first anchorites arrived there in the third century will be followed by a brief reference to the present inhabitants of the area, the Jabāliyya Bedouin tribe (section 2.1.1). Landscape, climate and technology have changed little from the early years of the Christian era. Although it would be naive to suggest that nothing has evolved since, it can be assumed that the modes of thinking of the people inhabiting the landscape, experiencing the climate and using the technology have not been drastically altered.[100] Despite adjusting to external *stimuli* and undertaking a variety of occupations, the South Sinai Bedouin often resort to long-established industries.[101] They also cling onto traditional ways of thinking and perceiving of themselves and their surroundings:[102]

> 'There is no reason to think that the Bedouin code of honor was any different in antiquity from what it is now. The Bedouin are as natural in the desert as its oases and its flowers.'

There is little information on the prehistoric antecedents of the South Sinai Bedouin. Although several studies have examined the archaeology of the earliest inhabitants of North Sinai and the Negev[103] and even Central Sinai,[104] the record on

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[100] Goldberg & Bar-Yosef 1982: 400.

[101] Available revenue resources since the early nineteenth century have included herding, agriculture, hunting, charcoal production, smuggling, protection or transportation services for travellers and seasonal or short-term employment; see Rabinowitz 1985: 216-25.

[102] Bowersock 1996: 10. Since E. H. Palmer's days (1871: 78) this has been the view of many scholars that have studied the Sinai Bedouin. See also Tsafrir 1993c: 318.

[103] For references, see Goring-Morris 1987. Earlier research (starting with Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 194-7, describing 'primitive remains,' and C. T. Currelly in Petrie 1906: 243-4, figures 176-8) was summarised in Field 1952: 75-6, 81-91. See also Albright 1948 (for the same research project as Henry Field's); Oren 1979: 181-91.

the south of the peninsula is sporadic.[105] Round structures, *nawamis*, with a secondary burial usage, appear at several locations.[106] Small summer sites, evidently belonging to nomadic pastoral and hunter-gathering populations and dating from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic period (*circa* 8,500-5,500 BC), have been excavated in Wādī 'l-Dayr.[107] During the same period triangular-shaped installations of low stone-built walls (the so-called 'desert kites'), an ancient means of hunting game with separate 'herding' and 'killing' areas, were being used in the Horeb vicinity.[108]

It seems that Sinai – even its more remote southern portion – was a thoroughfare of communication and population infiltration between Asia and Egypt in Chalcolithic times (*circa* 4,500-3,500 BC).[109] Turquoise was mined there during the Chalcolithic (and perhaps even the Pottery Neolithic, *circa* 5,500-4,500 BC) period. This activity continued down to the Middle II and Late Bronze Ages (*circa* 1,900-1,550 BC and 1,550-1,150 BC respectively),[110] but by then Egyptians supervised a local workforce.[111]

Traces of copper mining dating back to the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Ages have been recognised on the northern slopes of the South Sinai Massif. By

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[104] Rothenberg 1979b: 109-27.
[105] For a preliminary report of an archaeological survey, see Rothenberg 1971; the flint implements were discussed in Ronen 1971.
[106] Eckenstein 1921: 90; Hershkovitz 1988: 47; Briend 2003: 1982. Beno Rothenberg (1971: 21) warned that *nawamis* were used in modern times for Bedouin burials, thus a misinterpretation of their function was possible. See also Finkelstein & Perevolotsky 1990: 69.
[107] Bar-Yosef 1982: 11-2.
[108] Meshel 2000: 121-42; Finkelstein & Perevolotsky 1990: 69.
[109] Rothenberg 1971: 15; Rothenberg 1979c: 137-66. There are several researches on the Egyptian presence in Sinai. Early works include Weill 1904; Breasted 1906: volume I, 6, 75-6, 275, 314-23; Breasted 1906: volume II, 352 (on epigraphy); Breasted 1906: volume IV, 204; Petrie 1906 (on the turquoise mines and other structures).
[110] For the early cult of the goddess Hathor at Serabit el-Khadim, near the turquoise mines, see Eckenstein 1921: 17-29.
[111] Eckenstein 1921: 52-63; Skrobucha 1966: 4-5; Beit-Arieh 1982: 13-8.

the Middle to Late Bronze Age the scale of the activity was relatively smaller than turquoise.[112] Mining encouraged sedentarisation.[113] Semi-sedentary populations also engaged in animal husbandry. However, little agriculture appears to have been developed, with the possible exception of some oases.[114] Contacts with both Egypt and Palestine persisted.

The material and textual record is smaller and less researched when it comes to the first millennium BC. Although North Sinai was strategic, located between Africa and Asia, the Mediterranean and the Red Sea,[115] South Sinai was distant and isolated. High mountains made the passage of caravans difficult and the presence of minerals seems to have been the only attraction to outsiders. Consequently, references to South Sinai in late antique historiography were scarce and invariably brief.[116] It can be assumed – based on circumstantial evidence – that the area was annexed as part of Provincia Arabia by the Roman Empire in *AD* 106, like the northern part of the peninsula.[117]

Sinai emerges from relative obscurity sometime in the first or the second century, thanks to the so-called 'Sinaitic' inscriptions (for a history of the relevant discipline, see section 5.1.1). One of the earliest references to them appeared in

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[112] Rothenberg 1971: 17-8; Briend 2003: 1980-6, 2042-53. For a brief mention of mines near Horeb, see Aharoni 1961: 166.
[113] Finkelstein & Perevolotsky 1990: 74-9.
[114] Thompson 1975: 3 (for absolute dates), 24-9 (for archaeological research in the area); Hershkovitz 1988: 47; Briend 2003: 1977-80.
[115] On the strategic importance of (North) Sinai, see Eckenstein 1921: 83; Kamil 1991: 8 (on the 'Way of Horus,' the military road from Egypt to Palestine); Bowersock 1996: 5.
[116] On references to South Sinai in Diodorus and Strabo, see Eckenstein 1921: 83-5; Negev 1986: 113-5.
[117] On the incorporation of the Nabatean kingdom into Rome, under the name of 'Arabia,' see Eckenstein 1921: 91; Mayerson 1994: 232-3; Bowersock 1996: 76-89. For the inclusion of Sinai in the new province and the vagueness of its boundaries, see Sartre 1982: 37-40; Nevo 1991: 111-2 note 7; Bowersock 1996: 94-5, 102-3.

the *Christian Topography*. The author, a merchant whose name is believed to have been Kosmas, the so-called 'Indikopleustēs' ('he who sailed to India'), narrated that he had actually seen these 'Hebrew' sculpted letters in the Sinai desert, perhaps sometime in the first half of the sixth century:[118]

> 'Wherefore, in that wilderness of Mount Sinai, one can see, at all their halting-places, all the stones, that have there been broken off from the mountains, inscribed with Hebrew letters, as I myself can testify, having travelled in these places.' **(Text III)**

Another reference appeared in Petrus Diaconus' (1107-1153) *Book on Holy Places*, which filled the *lacuna* of the missing part of Egeria's itinerary (section 2.4.1):[119]

> 'All around the mountains caves have been carved out, and, if you just took the trouble to put up some curtains, they would make marvellous bedrooms. Each bedroom is inscribed with Hebrew letters.' **(Text IV)**

The inscriptions have been the object of scholarly debate as to their authorship, date and decipherment. Today they are attributed to either Nabatean copper miners who arrived in Sinai with the Romans[120] or to a Nabatean population that began to appear in the area around the late first century BC.[121] They are dispersed all over the peninsula,[122] unlike Greek, Coptic or Armenian inscriptions, which seem to be concentrated along pilgrim routes towards

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[118] Translated in Cosmas 1897: 159-60. French translation in Cosmas 1970: 84. Another edition of the Greek text in Cosmas 1909: 154. See also Eckenstein 1921: 88-9; Wolska 1962: 3. For Kosmas and the dates of his travels, see Eckenstein 1921: 88-9; Ševčenko 1966: 255-6 note 2; Cosmas 1968: 15-9; Wilkinson 1977: 6; Dahari 2000: 22-3. It has been argued that Kosmas identified the Mount of the Law with Jabal Sirbāl near Pharan rather than Hagia Koryphē on Horeb, but the case of an error is much more likely; see Lagrange 1897: 128-9; Ševčenko 1966: 255-6 note 2; Vaux 1978a: 429; Tsafrir 1993c: 327. Another theory linked the account of Kosmas, possibly emerging from within a Nestorian milieu (Champdor 1963: 18-9), with an effort to identify *loca sancta* alternative to these of the ecumenical church; see section 5.1.2; Maraval 1985: 75, 307.

[119] Translation from Egeria 1971: 208; Cosmas 1970: 85-6 note 53[2]; also, see section 2.4.1. On Petrus Diaconus, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 247.

[120] Negev 1967: 254-5; Briend 2003: 1987-8.

[121] Meshel 2000: 144, 149 note 1. Beno Rothenberg supported the theory of two waves of settlers in the first and second to third century (Briend 2003: 1987). Other scholars argued for an earlier

Horeb.[123] A different group of inscriptions, also called 'Sinaitic' but more correctly 'proto-Sinaitic,' dates from the middle of the second millennium BC and is in one of the earliest alphabetic scripts of a Semitic dialect.[124]

An interesting theory on the writers of 'Sinaitic' inscriptions was suggested by Ze'ev Meshel, who attributed them to local populations, shepherds rather than traders, the 'Bedouin of the past.' These peoples existed in the area before the advent of the Nabateans in the northern part of the peninsula, adopted their language (a mixture of Aramaic and Arabic) and script and carved the inscriptions all over a region they knew well.[125]

The Nabateans themselves had adopted Greek by the late second century,[126] whereas their own language continued to be used in Sinai until the late third century (the latest dated Nabatean inscription from the peninsula dates to 268).[127] South Sinai was distant from trade routes in which the Nabateans would be interested[128] and even copper mining was concentrated away from the area during the period.[129] The few dated inscriptions (from the years after the annexation of the Nabatean kingdom by Rome in *AD* 106) and the pastoral nature of the associated rock drawings further

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Nabatean infiltration. For a third-century BC date, see Taylor 2001: 154.

[122] On the number and dispersal of the Nabatean inscriptions of Sinai, see Negev 1986: 6-7.

[123] Meshel 2000: 144. For inscriptions in a variety of languages along roads to Hagia Koryphē, see Negev 1977b; Negev 1981. Their wide dispersal outside pilgrim routes refutes Heinz Skrobucha's theory that the inscriptions were carved by pilgrims; see Skrobucha 1966: 15.

[124] Grimme 1923; Sprengling 1931; Aharoni 1961: 118; Skrobucha 1966: 5-6; Albright 1966; Rainey 1975; Rainey 1981; Knauf 1988: 114-24; Briend 2003: 1989-91. 'Proto-Sinaitic' inscriptions have also been supposed to be of Israelitic origin by some scholars; see Völter 1924.

[125] Negev 1986: 9.

[126] According to Avraham Negev, the Nabatean language survived until the early third century and even later in South Sinai; see Negev 1986: 109, 111, 115.

[127] Negev 1982: 23-4; Negev 1991: 209.

[128] The camel caravan trade route from the West Arabian Peninsula to Egypt passed from the North Sinai desert; see Hourani 1995: 22, map II opposite page 36.

[129] Rothenberg 1971: 18.

support Meshel's theory.[130] The peak sanctuary on Jabal Mu'tamr near Pharan seems to have been a rather isolated survival of a Nabatean cultic institution (section 2.3).[131]

The wide usage of the term 'Saracens' for the populations of Sinai (instead of 'Arabs' or 'Nabateans') could underline the indigenous nature of the people inhabiting the area during the Early Christian period.[132] However, the term could also have been used to differentiate between tent-dwelling *scenites* or *scenitae*[133] and sedentary Arabs ('Saracens'), thus encompassing a much broader area than South Sinai.[134] In any case, by the sixth century the term 'Saracen' was used by the Byzantines for all Arab-speaking peoples.

By the mid- to late fourth century Provincia Arabia had become a marginal part of the province of Palaestina Tertia,[135] a change that betrays an improved understanding on the part of the imperial government of the difficulties, even threats, posed by the nomadic tribes of the desert areas of Negev and Sinai.[136] Arab Bedouin tribes were used by now as *foederati*, confederates of the Byzantines who guarded frontiers and ensured the protection of the local population in remote areas.[137] Monastic tradition assigns a tower surviving within

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[130] Meshel 2000: 146-8, 150-1; Dahari 2000: 7.
[131] Meshel 2000: 150. The Nabatean settlement associated with the Pharan area appears to have been abandoned by the mid-second century; see Grossmann *et al.* 1996: 28.
[132] Meshel 2000: 149 note 1. On the term 'Saracen,' *Sharqiyīn*, see the detailed essay by Irfan Shahîd (1984a: 123-41); the older article by B. Moritz (1920: 2387-90) remains useful; see also Eckenstein 1921: 95; Égérie 1982: 137 note 3; Mayerson 1986: 36; Exeria 1991: 47 note 13; Figueras 2000: 73-7; Dahari 2000: 8-9.
[133] For the term '*scenitae*' in Pliny and Ammianus Marcelinus, see Figueras 2000: 71.
[134] Shahîd 1984a: 137; Shahîd 1995b: 968.
[135] As Kenneth Gutwein (1981: 23) noted, it is only in Prokopios' *On Buildings* that Sinai is specifically mentioned as a part of Palaestina Tertia; see section 2.4.4, **text XXV**.
[136] Sartre 1982: 74. For a general study of Palaestina Tertia, focusing on its urban developments, see Gutwein 1981: 5-40. For the creation of Palaestina Tertia, see Mayerson 1994: 233; Mayerson 1988: 65-6.
[137] Gutwein 1981: 314-21; Shahîd 1984b: 399-400, 548; Mayerson 1986: 40-5; Mayerson 1989: 72-3. Mention of the Arab populations of the Sinai was made throughout Irfan Shahîd's studies on

the present-day Monastery of Saint Catherine to the early fourth century and connects it with the imperial Holy Land programme associated with the creation of Palaestina Tertia (figures 19 and 20, section 2.2).

A first-hand account of the customs and way of living of these tribes around Horeb during the Early Christian period appeared in a much-discussed hagiographical 'historical romance,' the *Narrations of Nilos the hermit monk of the demise of the Mount Sinai monks and of the captivity of his son Theodoulos.* This work was once falsely attributed to Saint Nilos (fifth century) but has been variously dated by scholars between the fourth and the seventh century (on the *Narrations* in relation to the narrative of Ammonios, see section 2.4.3):[138]

> 'The aforementioned nation [of the Barbarians] lives in the desert that extends from Arabia to Egypt, the Red Sea, and the river Jordan; they never practiced a craft, or commerce, or agriculture, and they only have the knife to deal with the necessities of feeding. Because they either live by eating the flesh of the desert animals they hunt; or they provide themselves with what they need, in whatever way they can, by robbing people that happen to pass from the roads near which they lurk. When there is a dearth of both of these and they lack in necessities, they use their beasts of burden (which are dromedary camels) as food, conducting a monstrous and flesh-eating life, slaughtering one per family or tent group, and using a little fire to loosen the firmness of the flesh, so as to say that they do not exercise too much pressure on their teeth, they feed

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Byzantium and the Arabs before Islam (Shahîd 1984b, 1989, 1995a and 1995b). However, little can be said about the local populations of the interior of the South Sinai Massif and this has to be attributed to the paucity of source material.

[138] For a Latin translation, see Nilus 1860a: 611-4; for a general discussion, see Eckenstein 1921: 106-9; Labib 1961: 8-10; Skrobucha 1966: 30-2; Huber 1979: 203-6; on the manuscript tradition and editions of the text, see Christides 1973: 43 note 1; Mayerson 1975: 52-4. The attack was initially dated *circa* 410, during the rule of Theodosios II (410-450); see Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 198-9. Friedrich Degenhart (1915: 8-9, 33-7) placed it *circa* 373-378. Another view placed 'Nilos'' lifetime in the seventh century; see *Synaxis* 1998: 156, 175-6 (without any argumentation). Robert Devreesse (1940: 220, 220 note 4) and Ihor Ševčenko (1966: 256, 256 note 5) suggested that this particular passage (if indeed the whole text dated from the sixth century, as proposed by Devreesse) echoed some earlier source. Vassilios Christides (1973: 40-6) accepted the value of the work as a source for the geographical and historical context of the probably fictional actions described in it and dated the events to the early fourth century. Philip Mayerson (Mayerson 1963: 160-2; Mayerson 1975: 51-8; Mayerson 1980: 133-4) and Irfan Shahîd (1989: 134-9) argued for the authenticity of the text and its attribution to the fifth century.

> themselves like dogs. They are not aware of the spiritual God, or even a handmade one; they worship the morning star and when it rises, they sacrifice to it the appropriate part of their loot, whenever, from a thieving assault, they come across something worth slaughtering.' **(Text V)**

The text continues with a description of a camel sacrifice and allusions to human sacrifice, involving circumambulation of the victim, blood drinking and omophagia.[139] The barbarians described inhabited the desert of Sinai and the Negev. They appear to have been hunters and brigands, bursting from time to time into murderous rampages.[140] They also worshipped and sacrificed to the morning star.[141] The writer (who shall be referred to as 'Nilos') must have had a distorted view of the Bedouin – contrasting them unfavourably with the virtuous anchorites he praised in following paragraphs – but his testimony cannot be altogether rejected.[142]

Nevertheless, archaeological evidence points to a rather more civilised sedentary population, occupied with farming in oases and small orchards and with the husbandry of goats, sheep and camels.[143] It is probable that the Bedouin also

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[139] For a study of these cultic practices, see Lagrange 1905: 257-9. For human sacrifice among the Nabateans, see Browning 1994: 213-4. Joseph Henninger, in a meticulously researched article (1955: 97-148 for a discussion of sacrifices), questioned the ethnographic validity of the information in 'Nilos'' account altogether. However, its reliability has been defended by several scholars: William Foxwell Albright (1968: 207-9) argued favourably for the practice of human sacrifice among the Arabs. Philip Mayerson (1975: 56-7) read into the text evidence of an unknown Christian sect. Vassilios Christides (1973: 46-50) characterised references by 'Nilos' to both camel and human sacrifice and stone worship as genuine and argued that, even if the Sinai Arabs sacrificed no humans, the Christians of the area were certain of it. In his late sixth-early seventh-century work *Spiritual Meadow*, John Moschos (Syrian, mid-sixth century-*circa* 619) mentioned Greek-speaking Saracens taking good-looking prisoners to their priest for sacrifice during the rule of Maurice (539-602, ruled 582-602); see John 1992: 129; the beauty of victims seemed to play a role in the 'Nilos' *Narrations*, too; see Mayerson 1975: 60. On camel sacrifice, see King 2009: 81-93, with earlier bibliography; on blood-drinking, see Murray 1935: 197-8.

[140] Mayerson 1975: 64-5; Isaac 1984: 194, 196.

[141] On the cult of the morning star, see Tsafrir 1993c: 320.

[142] Mayerson 1975: 52-3. On the negative image of Arabs in Early Christian sources, see Shahîd 1995b: 984-6.

[143] The system of orchard agriculture seems to be distinctly South Sinaitic and must be connected with the economic activity of the anchorites, see Perevolotsky 1981: 353-5. On camel herding, see Eckenstein 1921: 90-1.

serviced the increasing stream of pilgrims to the area by earning their livelihood as guides.[144] The period from the fourth to the seventh century is one of sedentarisation and even urbanisation in otherwise arid areas far from commercial thoroughfares. The presence of anchorites and pilgrims must have been the main reason for this change which would be reversed again after the Islamic conquest (section 4.1).[145] The benevolent figure of Ammanes, the Bedouin chief in the work by 'Nilos,' is far removed from the feral barbarians who perpetrated the violent acts against the narrator, his son and the anchorites. Ammanes was probably one of the already mentioned *foederati*, confederates of the Byzantines who protected the population of the frontier province of Palaestina Tertia.[146]

Many of the locals (raiders or traders, farmers or guides) were converted to Christianity through the zealous action of the anchorites,[147] and urban centres like Raithō and Pharan to the west of the peninsula, with several churches and monasteries,[148] were populated with Christian Arabs,[149] probably using Greek as their main language.[150] Researchers of skeletal material from Early Christian burials in Pharan claimed that the population inhabiting the area was very close in terms of physical characteristics to the Bedouin of modern South Sinai.[151]

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[144] Negev 1977b: 78; Gutwein 1981: 23-6, 246-8 (for pilgrim routes); Tsafrir 1993c: 318-20.
[145] Perevolotsky 1981: 353; Finkelstein & Perevolotsky 1990: 79-80; Mayerson 1994 (originally published in 1987): 232-42.
[146] Eckenstein 1921: 107-8; Mayerson 1975: 67-8; Mayerson 1986: 40-5; Mayerson 1989: 73-4.
[147] For the Christianisation of 'Saracens,' see Ammonius 1912: 4-5; Shahîd 1984b: 298-302, 308; Shahîd 1989: 524-6; Mayerson 1989: 74.
[148] For a review of the archaeological research in Pharan, see Grossmann 1989: 1901-4; Shahîd 1995b: 986-9; Grossmann *et al.* 1996. For Raithō, see Grossmann 1989: 1906-8.
[149] Shahîd 1984b: 298-305, 555-6.
[150] For a Greek-speaking Saracen in the late fifth-early sixth century, see John 1992: 129.
[151] Hershkovitz 1988: 53, 56-8.

Nonetheless, pagan practices continued to be carried out in the area. If the incidents described in the *Narrations* by 'Nilos' date to the fourth or the fifth century (but, even more interestingly, if they actually were sixth-century fabrications), the Horeb Bedouin had remained pagan and often rebellious and the Piacenza pilgrim's sixth-century account (visited Horeb in the 550s) supported this (sections 2.2, 2.2.1 and 2.4.5).[152] Thousands of stones for pagan worship have been located in Negev and Sinai as late as the sixth century and are associated with the 'Nabateans' (the term should be used cautiously four centuries after the demise of the Nabatean state).[153] Furthermore, the presence of a pagan cult connected with large-scale agricultural projects in the Negev has been suggested for the fifth and the sixth century.[154] Although economic conditions in South Sinai were different, the Byzantines may well have tolerated paganism there as well.

It could be argued that two distinct groups shared the area, a nomadic pagan element in the mountains and a sedentary Christian one in the fertile oases and busy ports (the *al-Badw* and *al-ᶜArab* of the Arabic sources respectively). Both groups would be named Saracens in Greek sources.[155] However, archaeological evidence from the Pharan area testifies to a mixture of Christianity and paganism, as burials

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[152] Shahîd 1984b: 302, 306, 319-24.

[153] Far older sanctuaries with single or multiple upright stones, identified with the Biblical *massebot* by Israeli archaeologists and dated to the fourth or the third millennium BC, have been located in the area to the east of Horeb, but not in the immediate vicinity. It appears that there are many more remaining to be discovered. The tradition of *massebot* continued into the Nabatean, Early Christian and Umayyad periods; see Avner 1984: 115-9 and map in figure 1 (page 116); see also section 2.1.

[154] Nevo 1991: 125-35.

[155] Shahîd 1984b: 301-02, 328; for the differentiation between *al-Badw* and *al-ᶜArab*, see Shahîd 1995b: 968-9, 972-4.

were furnished with crosses as well as altars.[156] It would therefore be safer to simply suggest a longer survival of paganism in the interior of the South Sinai Massif, a phenomenon often associated with remote areas.[157]

2.1.1. The Jabāliyya

While discussing the mid-sixth-century building programme of the emperor Justinian, historians Prokopios of Caesarea (*circa* 500-*circa* 565) and Eutychios of Alexandria (Saᶜīd ibn Biṭrīq, 877 - *circa* 940, writing in the early tenth century) mentioned the settlement of a substantial new population of frontier guards and their families (Latin: *limitanei*) near Horeb with the aim of protecting the area and the anchorites (sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2).

The Bedouin who live around Horeb today belong to the Jabāliyya (Arabic for mountaineers, from *jabal*, mountain),[158] a tribe claiming their descent from

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[156] Hershkovitz 1988: 53, 58; for a general discussion, see Tsafrir 1993c: 322-3.

[157] Shahîd 1989: 136. The reference to pagans at Peloponnesos, Greece, in *To my own Son Rōmanos* (commonly known as *De Administrando Imperio*) (50:71-8) by the Byzantine emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (born 905, died 959, ruled 945-59) is an oft-quoted example of pagan survival as late as the tenth century; see Kalligas 1990: 36, 45-8.

[158] The earliest systematic descriptions of the Jabāliyya Bedouin are to be found in Burckhardt 1822: 554-64, especially 562-4; Newbold 1847: 71-2; Ritter 1866: 384-6. H. S. Palmer visited the area in 1868-1869 as a member of the *Ordnance Survey* team and narrated some interesting traditions and practices; see Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 57; Palmer 1871: 74-100. For a thorough physical anthropology study conducted between 1947 and 1948, see Field 1952: 65-161, especially 78-9, 106-17 for the Jabāliyya and 132 for camel brands; in it, the Jabāliyya were studied separately from the rest of the Sinai Bedouin, although differences appeared to be slight. However, H. Field (1952: 92, 106, not to be confused with the nineteenth-century traveller H. M. Field also quoted in the thesis) seemed convinced of their foreign (European) origin. Serological tests conducted in November 1967 on 297 Bedouin from several tribes concluded that the tribe of Jabāliyya 'differs very markedly not only from the other Sinai Beduin but from all other neighbouring populations' (Bonné *et al.* 1971: 397): 'In general, the prominent negroid features observed in the Jebeliya call for a reappraisal of their historical and ethnic background' (Bonné *et al.* 1971: 407). The results and methodology of similar research was questioned in Popescu-Belis 2001: 140-1. For a discussion of the Southeast European (Latin-speaking Thracian) origin of the Jabāliyya, see Nandris 1981: 608-9; Nandris 1984; Nandris 1990. See also Murray 1935: 265-6; Oppenheim 1943: 135-9, 165-6; Daumas 1951: 17; Aharoni 1961: 145; Skrobucha 1966: 62-3;

Justinian's settlers. They were supposedly brought over from Egypt and from 'Vlah,' in Southeast Europe. Although the tradition of a European 'Vlah' derivation was probably concocted in the eighteenth or the nineteenth century,[159] the memory of a distant origin remains strong among the Jabāliyya to this day. However, it seems more probable that their ancestors were actually members of a Christian Arab *foederati* tribe.[160]

Even if they profess to be racially distinct from the rest of the Sinai Bedouin, the Jabāliyya share their way of life and customs. The other Bedouin refer to them in contempt as 'the servants to the monastery' and avoid intermarriage, so that endogamy is common.[161] Some of them still perform their duties as servants in the Monastery and cultivate its gardens,[162] others continue to practice orchard agriculture,[163] but most of them prefer the much more profitable tourism industry or lead a 'hand-to-mouth' existence engaged in seasonal employment.[164] Although most of the Jabāliyya were converted to Islam at the time of caliph ᶜAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān (646-705, ruled 685-705, see section 4.1.2), a few probably clung to the monks' religion and the last practising Christian woman reportedly died in

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Marx 1977: 37-8; Ben-David 1977-8: i-iv; Arad & Michael 1984 (for an extensive and intimate photographic record of Bedouin life); Bailey 1991: 5-6; Tetsuo 1992: ix-xi; Hobbs 1995: 139-51; Basile 1998; Goren 1999: 8-9, 43, 60.

[159] Popescu-Belis 2001: 107-46.

[160] Field 1952: 78; Shahîd 1984b: 306, 306 note 82, 385 note 133; Irfan Shahîd (1995b: 977-80) adopted a critical approach to Eutychios' account of this move and suggested that it was Christian Arabs (perhaps Lakhmids) that were used as guards, a view embraced by Popescu-Belis 2001: 114, 116-7, 120, 139 and actually supported by Eutychios; see section 4.1.2.

[161] Lavie 1990: 268.

[162] For an early photograph of nine of these servants, see Wilson & Palmer 1869: part III, volume I, 26.

[163] Products include grapes, almonds, apples, apricots, pomegranates, figs, plums, quinces, peaches and dates; see Perevolotsky 1981: 337-56.

[164] Hobbs 2001: 207-11.

1750.[165] In 1929, they numbered 420 souls,[166] 1,100 by 1968,[167] but their population has significantly increased in the past twenty years or so.

2.2. The coming of the anchorites

> 'There are very many of us; [...] and whenever we are hungry, we readily find food; likewise, if we are thirsty, we have water.' **(Text VI)**
>
> Paphnutius, *Life and polity of our saintly father Onuphrius.*[168]

The Early Christian anchoretic and monastic phenomenon has been a source of much inspiration for both believers and scholars. It has been immortalised in a series of narratives and saints' lives and has left numerous albeit humble material remains in the form of hermits' abodes, monasteries, workshops and irrigation structures. The reasons why great numbers of urban and peasant populations felt impelled to socially disengage themselves and retreat into the wilderness, into a life of destitution and hardship (either communal or solitary), have been the object of much discussion. Economic and social conditions pushing debt-ridden peasants in the desert, away from servitude and forced labour,[169] were combined with a growing religious awareness, stemming from Judaeo-Christian traditions which placed personal salvation in the centre of individuals' life plans.

These reasons led to a massive movement from the secular, varied, inter-related and productive societies of Late Antique cities into the sacred, celibate, autarkic and scarcely self-sustaining societies of Early Christian deserts, waiting for the coming of a New Age. New role models emerged for believers: the anchorites,

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[165] Burckhardt 1822: 564.
[166] Field 1952: 93 (information provided by the then archbishop of Sinai).

people of little or no education, content in their search for God and complete material denial, inhabiting the desert margin of the urban Mediterranean world.[170]

However, the question to be answered in relation to the Sinaitic anchoretic tradition refers not to the factors which pushed people away from their previous lives but to those which attracted them to such a remote area. They were fascinated by the sanctity of a place associated with the most important theophany, in the way Theodoret of Cyrrhus (*circa* 393-*circa* 457) put it in his *History of the Monks of Syria* (section 2.4.2):[171]

> ... Not that we think that the Godhead has been circumscribed in place [...] but since to those who love fervently not only are their beloved thrice desired, but lovable too are the places that have been graced by their presence and frequenting. **(Text VII)**

It also was the practical possibility of survival in a remote and harsh environment through hard work and patient exploitation of the physical resources that allowed a minimum of necessities to be fulfilled (see section 1.5.4).[172]

How did the summit which is now called Hagia Koryphē come to be considered the 'Mount of the Law,' as mentioned in the Pentateuch? The Bible itself is

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[167] Marx 1977: 36.
[168] Author's translation. Latin translation in Paphnutius 1781: 123. On Onuphrius, see Eckenstein 1921: 95-6; Skrobucha 1966: 20; Hobbs 1995: 129-30; Dahari 2000: 22. On his cell, identified traditionally in the vicinity of Horeb, see Dahari 2000: 66; *Egeria* 2008: 87.
[169] Tsafrir 1993c: 320.
[170] Brown 1998: 51-9. On the notions of disengagement (Greek: *anachorēsis,* from which comes the term 'anchorite') and autarky, see Brown 1996: 81-101.
[171] Translated in Theodoret 1985: 65-6; for a French translation, see Théodoret 1977: 356-7. For the relationship between a location and a holy act performed there that forms the basis of pilgrimage practice, see Wilken 1996: 130-5.
[172] Eckenstein 1921: 94-5. One of the latest and most interesting accounts of the monastic phenomenon of South Sinai is to be found in Tsafrir 1993c, although the lack of bibliographical references is frustrating. Research for this section was conducted independently from Yoram Tsafrir's article but its conclusions agree with the majority of the Israeli archaeologist's conclusions.

vague and even contradictory on the location of Mount Sinai.[173] A passage in *Galatians* (4:25) seems to locate the 'Mount of the Law' in the Arabian Peninsula rather than the Sinaitic one.[174] Jewish tradition did not identify the holiest of mountains with a specific location, although the *Septuagint* tradition (which is Alexandrian in origin) must have placed it somewhere to the northwest of Arabia.[175] This is the tradition which Eusebios followed (section 1.4, **text I**).

There is no tradition of visitation to an Arabian or any other Mount Sinai before the Christian era.[176] The main Jewish pilgrimage destination was the Temple in Jerusalem,[177] although there is evidence for several others of lesser importance, temples, synagogues, tombs of ancestors and heroes.[178] It has also been suggested that the list of stages in Israel's journey (*Numbers* 33) constitutes a pilgrimage itinerary, like the one followed by Elijah (1 *Kings* 19).[179] The earliest evidence for Jews visiting Hagia Koryphē as the 'Mount of the Law' dates to Early Christian times and evidently followed Christian tradition.[180]

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[173] Klopfenstein 1979: 17-31.
[174] '... Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia,' see Vaux 1978a: 435-6; Maiberger 1984: 73-82; Tsafrir 1993c: 316; for Arabia as the probable location of the Mount of the Law, see Vaux 1978a: 432-9. Allen Kerkeslager (1998: 180-8) argued for an alternative reading of the passage ('which is Hagar – but Sinai is a mountain in Arabia – which corresponds to ...') that avoids any confusion with the word 'Hagar.'
[175] Perhaps there was such a tradition among Egyptian Jews; see Aharoni 1961: 126; Tsafrir 1993c: 315. This possibility is exhaustively explored in Kerkeslager 1998: 153-79, 188-92, who argues that the Alexandrian tradition of Mount Sinai near the city of Madian / Madyan / Madiam (see also Eusebios' **text I**, section 1.4), present day Al-Badᶜ in Saudi Arabia, was followed by Paul and Palestinian writers.
[176] The reference to such a visitation tradition in Kerkeslager 1998: 201-7 is purely conjectural.
[177] Coleman & Elsner 1995: 34-47, especially 40-5; Friedman 1996: 136-46. However, it seems that the popularity of the Temple pilgrimage has been overstated; see Kerkeslager 1998: 106. On Jewish holy places other than the Temple, see Peters 1996: 40, 464-5 notes 3, 5; Wilken 1996: 120-4.
[178] Kerkeslager 1998: 104-46.
[179] For a discussion and bibliography, see Vaux 1978a: 434-7; Vaux 1978b: 560-2, 560-1 notes 26, 27; see also Greene 1883: 139-52; Herrmann 1975: 73; Kerkeslager 1998: 148-50.
[180] Negev 1977b: 79-80.

The question of whether Hagia Koryphē is indeed the Biblical 'Mount of the Law' has tantalised several scholars (for the nineteenth-century 'Mount of the Law controversy' see chapter 5).[181] Horeb is the neck of a dead volcano (section 1.5.3) and it could be assumed that the phenomena narrated in *Exodus* (sections 2.4.3 and 2.4.6) were inspired by its activity[182] if geological research had not proven that they ceased millennia before humans appeared.[183]

There is no rigorous way to discover if the promulgation of the Law took place on Hagia Koryphē or another summit or indeed any Sinai mountain. In the mind and heart of a believer, going up 'Mount Sinai' is more of a spiritual quest for God than an ascent up a geographically pinpointed mountain. It is this quest that Horeb and Hagia Koryphē came to embody for Christians, Jews and Muslims.[184] Through their mediation, Hagia Koryphē became and remains the 'Mount of the Law,' one of the most sacred landscapes.[185]

The earliest anchorites in South Sinai must have arrived in the third century and their movement increased during the fourth century.[186] Three Christian

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[181] Herrmann 1975: 72-3, 77; Vaux 1978a: 426-39. For Emanuel Anati's arguments situating the Mount of the Law at Har Karkom in South Negev (since 1983), see Anati 1993: 19-89; for a refutation of his theory, see Briend 2003: 2062. For a recent theory locating the Mount of the Law in the Saudi Arabian Jabal al Lawz, to the east of the Gulf of Aqaba, see Blum 1998; Kerkeslager 1998: 152 note 218, 210-3.
[182] On the association of Mount Sinai and volcanic activity, see Kerkeslager 1998: 203 note 366.
[183] Thunder and fire frequently accompanied theophanies in Near Eastern mythology and these phenomena were not exclusively connected with Mount Sinai.
[184] In the words of L. Golding (a Jewish writer visiting Horeb in the 1930s) '...the Holy Mountain is a spiritual, not a physical experience,' see Golding 1938: 341. For a journey up a spiritual Mount Sinai, see Cantalamessa 1996. For post-World War II pilgrimages to Hagia Koryphē, see Wellard 1970: 101-14; Praill 1995: 210-29 (visiting Horeb between 30 October and 2 November 1993, a sadly accurate description of the experience in recent years).
[185] For a detailed study of the possible reasons for the identification of Hagia Koryphē with the Mount of the Law, see Maiberger 1984, especially 82-9. For Biblical identifications in Palestine, see Coleman & Elsner 1995: 83-8.
[186] Amantos 1953: 7; Champdor 1963: 19-20; Huber 1979: 201-2; Panayotidi & Kalopissi-Verti 2007: no pagination. Peter Grossmann (2002: 20 note 19) suggested that no anchorites had settled

religious centres developed, one in Pharan (the episcopal see of the peninsula), a second in Raithō and a third on Horeb.[187] The first two centres were adjacent to towns and were linked to date agriculture and fishing (perhaps even trade) respectively.[188] However, the third was exclusively anchoretic in character and the small local population retained a nomadic economy and pagan religious practices (section 2.1). The anchorites themselves must have been engaged in agriculture alongside prayer and reflection and lived in abodes ranging from crudely built rock shelters to larger cells – it is indicative of their attitude to comfort that in most cells it was possible to sit or lie but impossible to stand upright.[189]

The archaeological evidence on the everyday life of anchorites at Horeb was studied predominantly by Israeli archaeologists during the 1967-1979/1982 occupation of the Sinai Peninsula.[190] They surveyed the ruins of hermit cells, chapels, auxiliary buildings, dams, water conduits and other structures. Indeed, the whole of Horeb, outside the main 'pilgrim path' of Burning Bush - Prophētēs Hēlias - Hagia Koryphē - Hagioi Tessarakonta, was dotted with such foundations (section 3.4). Many of these must be dated before the sixth century, when Justinian's

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in Horeb before the late 360s, based on the negative evidence of Julian Saba (section 2.4.2), but this is contradicted by several other sources examined here.

[187] Labib 1961: 4-10; Shahîd 1984b: 302-5; Finkelstein 1985: 39; Hershkovitz 1988: 47; Tsafrir 1993c: 322; Shahîd 1995b: 968-72, 983-4.

[188] On the Pharan settlement, monasteries and other buildings, see Rothenberg 1971: 20-1; Dahari 2000: 17-20, 113-37. Peter Grossmann, excavator of Pharan, refuted the prevailing belief that Pharan was mainly a monastic centre; see Grossmann 2002: 30 note 51. On Raithō anchorites, see *De Vitis Patrum* 1849: 1008; Eckenstein 1921: 96; on their abodes, see Dahari 2000: 138-46.

[189] Dahari 2000: 41.

[190] Finkelstein 1985: 42-60; Tsafrir 1993c: 324-5; Finkelstein 1993: 336-8. The most thorough and informative work on South Sinai monasticism is the one by Uzi Dahari (2000), where much information of archaeological and textual nature was gathered. It is unfortunate that the monastic tradition (preserved by the monks at the Monastery of Saint Catherine since Early Christian times) was not integrated into the conclusions of this research programme that used Bedouin rather than monks as guides (Finkelstein 1985: 74 note 31) and Arab names rather than the older Greek ones (section 1.4) –

imperial programme introduced buildings of monumental scale to the area. However, the technical sophistication and considerable ambition of the anchoretic projects makes them impressive in their own right and verifies the written sources (briefly examined below) which testify to many ascetics living on Horeb. The possibility of their subsistence had often been doubted because these installations were unknown, but it is now estimated that more than one hundred of them could have inhabited the arid mountain without importing provisions.[191]

In the *Life and polity and martyrdom of the Saint martyrs Galaktiōn and Epistēmē*, written by Symeon Metaphrastes in the tenth century, the third-century saints from Emesa in Syria were said to have set their ascetic abode on a mountain called Pouplion, which tradition identifies with Hagia Epistēmē (figures 3, 7, 11 and 12).[192] They were incorporated into a community of twelve anchorites:[193]

> 'After having walked for a full ten days, they arrive at mount Pouplion, as the ones living near it call it, situated near mount Sinai. Having met twelve monks there, living in ascetic polity, they announced their intention, and were worthy enough to be accepted and inscribed in their list.' **(Text VIII)**

Galaktiōn and Epistēmē suffered martyrdom during the persecution of Decius (*circa* 201-251, ruled 249-251), when a force was dispatched to arrest Christians at South Sinai.[194]

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the traditional dedications to saints of the various chapels surveyed were not even mentioned.

[191] Finkelstein 1985: 60; Dahari 2000: 48 and table 3.

[192] Hagia Epistēmē was one of the satellite anchoretic centres of Horeb and five *laurai* were surveyed there, see Dahari 2000: 49-54. The *laura* traditionally associated with Galaktiōn and Epistēmē was described in Dahari 2000: 50.

[193] Author's translation. For a Latin translation, see Symeon 1864a: 101-2.

[194] Symeon 1864a: 104-8; Eckenstein 1921: 97-8; Zachos 1937: 76-7; Skrobucha 1966: 19; Tsafrir 1993c: 320-1; *Synaxis* 1998: 138-9, 147-8; Dahari 2000: 21. Decius' persecution was mentioned in a letter by the then bishop of Alexandria Dionysios (born *circa* 190, died 264-65; see Burel 1910: 15, 117-8) to the bishop of Antioch. In it, 'Saracens' appeared as attacking and selling to slavery Christians; see Dionysius 1904: 17, 17 notes 1, 5, 6 (for the Greek text); Dionysius 1871: 213, 213 notes 1, 2; Dionysius 1918: 41, 41 notes 3, 5 (for English translations); Skrobucha 1966: 19;

In his *Ecclesiastical History* (mid-fifth century), Sozomenos (first half of fifth century) mentioned a Palestinian monk, Silvanos, who spent a little time in 'Mount Sinai' in the early fourth century, before creating an anchoretic community at Gerara:[195]

> 'I think that Silvanus, a native of Palestine, to whom, on account of his high virtue, an angel was once seen to minister, practiced philosophy about the same time in Egypt. Then he lived [for a while] at Mount Sinai…' **(Text IX)**

By 376-378, the rebellious queen Mavia (or Māwiya) requested Moses, a hermit, to become the bishop of her people. It is probable that he was one of the Horeb solitaries, although he could also have come from Pharan or the North Sinai desert.[196]

From the early fourth century, the concentration of anchorites in the area which had instigated Decius' persecution attracted imperial attention anew. A tower, known from the work by Eutychios of Alexandria and identified archaeologically within the confines of the Monastery of Saint Catherine, was built at the place of the Burning Bush (figures 19 and 20).[197] It was used for the

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Dahari 2000: 21 (for a discussion). However, the 'Arabian mount' or 'hills' mentioned in that text was not Sinai, as was alluded to by Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 198 and adopted by Tsafrir 1993c: 320, but a range of mountains to the east of the Nile, see Eckenstein 1921: 95.

[195] Translated in Sozomen 1891: 370, with an addition by the author. Devreesse (1940: 205-8) identified another Sinai anchorite, Nathyr or Netras, with Silvanos' disciple. See also Skrobucha 1966: 29-30; Chitty 1995: 72. The same text exists in Greek (see *Apophthegmata* 1858: 311-2 for a Latin translation):

> 'They narrate of Abba Nathyr, who was a disciple of Abba Silvanos, that when he was sitting in his cell on mount Sinai, he conducted himself in moderation as to the necessities of the body.' **(Texts X and XI**, author's translation)

On Silvanos and his time at Horeb, see Le Nain de Tillemont 1705: 450-3; Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 198; Eckenstein 1921: 96-7; Chitty 1995: 71-3, 168; *Synaxis* 1998: 187-8; on Netras, see Chitty 1995: 73-4, 168; *Synaxis* 1998: 176-7.

[196] On queen Mavia, see Eckenstein 1921: 104-5; Mayerson 1964: 178; Skrobucha 1966: 26; Sartre 1982: 140-4. Maurice Sartre disagreed with Philip Mayerson's assumption that Moses was bishop of Pharan; see Sartre 1982: 143 note 92. See also Labib 1961: 2-3; Huber 1979: 206; Shahîd 1984b: 152-8, 555-6; Tsafrir 1993c: 322; Dahari 2000: 19.

[197] *Exodus* (3:2):

> 'Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of

protection of the solitaries from the frequent Bedouin attacks.[198] Eutychios mentioned a chapel there dedicated to the Virgin Mary:[199]

> 'Before that time [of Justinian] there was no monastery in which the monks could congregate, but they were scattered in the mountains and wadis around the Bush from which God spoke to Moses. Above the Bush they only had a large tower, which is still standing to this day, and within it is a church dedicated to St Mary, and the monks would flee to this tower to protect themselves whenever anyone whom they feared approached.'

This sign of imperial concern for remote South Sinai related to the inclusion of the area into the Holy Land scheme (formed in the fourth century with the creation of Palaestina Tertia) but also to the presence of evidently rebellious pagan Arabs.[200]

It is not accidental that monastic tradition connected Helena (*circa* 250/257-*circa* 330/36), mother of Constantine I (272-337, ruled 312-337) and major inspiration for the Holy Land project, with the building of the tower.[201] It is also possible that it was erected before the rule of Constantine I and formed part of the reorganisation of the frontier fortresses (Latin: *limes*) during the years of Diocletian

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> God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up.'

[198] Grossmann 1988: 556-8, Abb. 3; Grossmann 1989: 1904-6, Abb. 27. Although these publications are the earliest archaeologically documenting the tower chapel, its age and importance were well known to the monks and it was shown, among others, to W. Turner; see Turner 1820: 441. On W. Turner, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 250. It was also shown to F. Arundale in September 1833 (Arundale 1837: 33) and E. Robinson in March 1838 (Robinson 1867: 98-99), from whom Sir Gardner Wilkinson (British, 1797-1875) borrowed the information; see Wilkinson 1843: 411; Wilkinson 1847: 219.

[199] English translation in Mayerson 1978: 36; Latin translation in Eutychius 1863: 1071-2; German translation in Eutychios 1985: 89 (the corresponding volume with the Arabic text has not yet been located). The basilica within the Justinianic fortress and the Monastery that was created within the fortress walls from the late sixth century onwards were also dedicated to the Virgin Mary; see section 3.2.

[200] Shahîd 1984b: 305-8, 313, 313 note 107, 315, 480-1. An attack by Agarenoi against Sinai desert fathers in the years of Diocletian was included in the *Synaxarium of the Church of Constantinople*; see below.

[201] Pococke 1814 (first published in 1743): 287, 289; Burckhardt 1822: 544; Eckenstein 1921: 99; Aharoni 1961: 159; Labib 1961: 8; Champdor 1963: 15; Skrobucha 1966: 19-20; *Perigraphē* 1978: 111; Kamil 1991: 18-9; Dahari 2000: 21, 59 (doubted the fourth-century date although he accepted the early dedication to the Virgin Mary that was testified in sources describing Helena's

(244-311, ruled 284/5-305). The presence of Egyptian high officials to the northeast of Hagia Koryphē, in 299/300, may be related to a mobilisation of the imperial defence system in South Sinai.[202] In this case, the tower was not only built to protect eremitic communities from the Saracens but to police the local population.

Probably in 451, the emperor Marcian (*circa* 392-457, ruled 450-57) addressed a letter to Makarios, bishop and archimandrite, and the 'monks in Mount Sinai' to warn them against the heretical actions of the Monophysite Theodosios, who was causing significant disturbance in Palestine and the Sinai.[203] It seems that by the mid-fifth century monastic life in the area was thriving, although the Greek word *monastēria* used by Marcian and translated literally as 'monasteries,' may also refer to anchoritic communities of smaller size, *laurai*.[204] It also appears that these communities remained outside the fervent mainstream theological debates of the Early Christian period, clinging to Chalcedonian dogmas.[205]

There was extensive literature on the lives and miracles of the wilderness fathers,[206] and *The Spiritual Meadow* by John Moschos (540/550-619 or 634), a very popular book in Byzantine times, was probably the best-known collection of them.[207] Several passages testified to a lively to-ing and fro-ing of anchorites and monks between the various monastic centres of the Balkans, Asia Minor, the

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tower). For Helena in the Holy Land, see Coleman & Elsner 1995: 78-9.

[202] For a Greek inscription mentioning a group of officials, see Negev 1977b: 62-7. On Diocletian's defence system along the eastern frontiers of Egypt, see Walser 1979: 224; Oren 1982: 211.

[203] Marcianus 1933: [491] 132. On the letter, see Eckenstein 1921: 110; Amantos 1953: 10; Skrobucha 1966: 35; Chitty 1995: 169; Dahari 2000: 22.

[204] For the small size of monasteries in South Sinai, see Dahari 1993: 349; Hobbs 1995: 63.

[205] Tsafrir 1993c: 315, 333; Shahîd 1995b: 983-4.

[206] For a representative summary of this literature, see Eckenstein 1921: 110-4.

[207] Greek text and Latin translation in Joannis 1860b; French translation in Jean 1946; on John Moschos, see Skrobucha 1966: 29; Baldwin 1991; Dahari 2000: 23.

Near East (especially Palestine) and Sinai (on this practice during later centuries, see sections 3.4 and 4.1.1).[208]

The erection of an imperially funded church and fortress (mid-sixth century, see sections 3.2 and 3.3) and the influence of important spiritual leaders, like John 'Klimax' in the early seventh century, must have added to Sinai's attraction. John, an abbot of the Monastery, was the writer of *The Heavenly Ladder* (*Klimax*), the standard manual for monks in East and West (section 3.4). His stories and exhortations created the framework of later Sinaitic monastic tradition (section 4.3.1). The *Narrations* of the 'humble monk' Anastasios (compiled after the middle of the seventh century) were another source of stories on desert fathers (section 2.4.6). They illustrated a world of extreme piety and eccentric devotion, often invested with humour and lyricism, which provided inspiration for generations of believers.

2.2.1. A troubled coexistence

The cosmopolitan community of anchorites[209] was kept distinctly separate from the local Bedouin population, both in origin and way of life. Archaeological remains have been interpreted as manifesting a distinct effort to avoid regular contact.[210] The coexistence was not always harmonious, although it seems that (in most instances) it was peaceful[211] and there is evidence of Bedouin serving as guides to pilgrims

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[208] Narratives in Joannis 1860b: 2855-8, 2957-60, 2979-88, 3001-2. Similar evidence is provided by Theodoret's *History of the Monks of Syria* (mid-fifth century); see section 2.4.2.
[209] On the origins of Horeb monks, see Tsafrir 1993c: 332. Cosmopolitanism was not unusual within the context of Palestinian monasticism; see Maraval 1985: 72.
[210] Dahari 1993: 350; Tsafrir 1993c: 321; Dahari 2000: 151.
[211] Grēgoriadēs 1875: 38-40; Hershkovitz 1988: 49; Tsafrir 1993c: 322; Kōnstantinos Amantos (1953: 7) noted that it was not only camels the Bedouin sacrificed to their gods, but Christian monks as well.

(section 2.1). However, when governments changed or intertribal arrangements collapsed, Bedouin bellicosity emerged (for later examples, see section 4.3.1).[212]

In the *Synaxarium of the Church of Constantinople* (tenth century and later, see section 3.1.4) two attacks were mentioned, the one by Blemmyes (or Vlemmyes, Africans) against fathers in the western coast of Sinai (Raithō)[213] – probably dating between the late fourth and early fifth century – and another by Agarenoi in the years of Diocletian (284/5-305):[214]

> 'These [saints] having envied the devil, he urged the savage nation of Vlemmyes to revolt against them; they live by the Red Sea from Arabia unto Egypt. And they, hoping to find riches, came to plunder the monks; since they found nothing but woven mats and the saints themselves wearing animal hair garments, they were outraged and slaughtered them, even though they did no harm. Many years earlier, in the days of Diocletian, saintly fathers were killed by the Agarenoi in Sinai and Raithō on the twenty-second day of December…' **(Text XII)**

Eutychios of Alexandria (sections 2.2 and 3.1.2) described sixth-century raids by 'Ishmaelite Arabs' who pillaged the possessions of the hermits, broke into their churches and desecrated them:[215]

> '… The Ishmaelite Arabs injured them by devouring their provisions, and destroying their places (of habitation). Entering their cells they would pillage them of whatever was there, and breaking into churches they would gulp down the Eucharist.'

The reasoning behind the attack against the fathers in the *Synaxarium*, looting of their riches, seems formulaic. However, when in the late twentieth century monks renovated the chapel of Hagios Geōrgios Arselaitēs (Saint George

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[212] Shahîd 1984b: 298; Tsafrir 1993c: 322.
[213] Also mentioned in a text by the Egyptian monk Ammonios (variously dated between the fourth and the early seventh century), where the narrative of a similar attack against fathers around Horeb is added; see section 2.4.3; Labib 1961: 4-6.
[214] Author's translation.
[215] English translation in Mayerson 1978: 36-7; Latin translation in Eutychius 1863: 1071-2;

of Arselas[216]), 'Dayr Rumḥān,' near Wādī Isla, the relatively comfortable Bedouin of the area[217] broke into it and shattered a marble paving slab in front of the altar in the hope of finding buried treasure underneath.[218] There are long-running traditions among the Bedouin that the books in the library at the Monastery of Saint Catherine hold the answers to all questions.[219] They underline the dynamic nature of the centuries-old symbiosis between anchorites and desert people.

2.2.1.1. Bedouin lore and the 'Book of Rain'

Despite tensions between the Bedouin and the monks, it seems that the former respected the latter's ability to survive in the desert despite not having been born there and 'consider[ed] this monastery to be the only stable foreign agency inside the Sinai.'[220] They also propagated deep-rooted traditions of sanctity and miraculous acts surrounding Hagia Koryphē, the Monastery and the monks.[221] Although most of the rituals and customs described below were recorded in the nineteenth and the twentieth century, they undoubtedly reflect much older beliefs and practices.

German translation in Eutychios 1985: 88-9 (the corresponding volume with the original Arabic text has not yet been located); for a discussion of the passage, see Shahîd 1995b: 976-7.

[216] On George of Arselas, see Eckenstein 1921: 113.

[217] Tending cannabis plantations along the Wādī; for a description of the area, see Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 136-7; for the monastic remains, see Finkelstein 1985: 60-73; Ovadiah 1985; Dahari 2000: 102-3; for the cannabis, see Burckhardt 1822: 536; Hobbs 1995: 181; Hobbs 1996: 17-8; Marx 1999: 353-4 (his claim that drug cultivation and smuggling in Sinai began in the twentieth century is refuted by Burckhardt's early evidence); Hobbs 2001: 208.

[218] The monk who had paved the chapel had carved the slab with a sixteen-point star, which was thought as a treasure sign. For Bedouin folklore on buried treasures, see Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 68.

[219] Michaēl 1999: 45. This belief seems to originate from a *topos* of medieval Arab folklore with regard to Byzantines in general, as several writers claimed that the priests of Constantinople and Hagia Sophia in particular jealously guarded their valuable libraries containing much hidden knowledge; see El Cheikh 2004: 196.

[220] Lavie 1990: 55.

[221] Zachos 1937: 125-6 Hobbs 1995: 170-1.

Every year at the Eid the Bedouin used to sacrifice a sheep or goat on Hagia Koryphē after having sacrificed three camels on three consecutive days at shaykhs' tombs.[222] They painted the lintel and doorjambs of the mosque with the victims' blood.[223] They also used to bring their goats to Hagia Koryphē on the day Saint Catherine was celebrated.[224] The pilgrimage to the summit was recommended by elders to women desirous of more children (and sometimes the very conception of the children *in situ* was encouraged, see section 4.4).[225]

Alexandre Dumas (French, 1802-1870) narrated a story he based on the notes of his friend, the painter Adrien Dauzats (French, 1804-1868), who visited Sinai in 1830. It came from a Bedouin guide named Bechara:[226]

> 'Allah created the earth square, and covered it with stones. When this labour was completed, he came down with his angels, and stood upon the peak of Sinai, which, as you know, is the centre of the world. He then traced an immense circle, whose circumference touched the four corners of the square, and ordered his angels to throw the stones into the four corners, which correspond with the four cardinal points. The angels obeyed, and when the circle was cleared, he gave it to the Arabs, who are his favourite children, and he named the four corners, France, Italy, England, and Russia.' **(Text XIII)**

Pious Bedouin circumambulated the Monastery with their flocks to get a blessing from the angels who supposedly sit at its four corners. Moses, Aaron, Saint George and Saint Catherine were regularly honoured.[227] Sir Frederick, second Baronet Henniker (British, 1793-1825, visiting Horeb on 21?-24 April 1820, on Hagia Koryphē probably on the 22nd) described the Bedouin

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[222] Murray 1935: 152-3; on the sheep or goat sacrifice, see Pococke 1814: 288; Palmer 1871: 118-9; Rogers 1883: 231; Champdor 1963: 50.
[223] Meistermann 1909: 151.
[224] Michaēl 1999: 27, 36.
[225] Murray 1935: 154.
[226] Translated quote from Dumas 1839a: 62; Dumas 1839b: 220.
[227] Burckhardt 1822: 595; Skrobucha 1966: 57; *Perigraphē* 1978: 117-8; Kamil 1991: 36-7;

slaughtering a sheep and parading it 'with great ceremony' round the walls of the Monastery.[228] He thought this act was meant to tantalise the fasting monks but it seems much more plausible they meant to honour the sacred enclosure.

Edward Henry Palmer (British, 1840-1882, first visited Sinai in 1867-68, figure 102) mentioned that the Bedouin left incense offerings in niches on the Monastery wall to venerate the prophet Khidhr (Elijah),[229] adding that they considered the building itself to have been erected in Moses' time.[230] Another visitor several years later added that, according to the Bedouin, Moses did the work himself 'and his daughter, St. Katarina, completed it.'[231]

Edward H. Palmer also reported that the Bedouin believed the monks to hold a book capable of controlling rainfall (the 'Book of Moses' or 'Book of Rain'), once hidden on Hagia Koryphē.[232] In the *Perigraphē* (*Description*), a compendium of Sinaitic monastic memory first printed in Greek in 1710, a story was told of the Bedouin demolishing the Hagia Koryphē chapel and digging deep in its ruins in vain search of the 'Book of Rain.'[233] The Swiss traveller Johann Ludwig Burckhardt (1784-1817, visited the Monastery twice in 1816, from 1 to 4 May and again from 18 to 30 May and ascended Hagia Koryphē on the 20th)[234] quoted his Bedouin guide ʿA'īd as saying:[235]

Tetsuo 1992: x.
[228] Henniker 1823: 229. On F. Henniker, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 243.
[229] Palmer 1871: 57. On E. H. Palmer, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 247.
[230] Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 63-4.
[231] Rendall 1911: 122-3.
[232] Burckhardt 1822: 567-8; Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 64; Palmer 1871: 65-6 (and 75-7, 85 for the veneration of the Monastery); Skrobucha 1966: 60 (the book was thought hidden in the Burning Bush chapel); Hobbs 1995: 164-5.
[233] *Perigraphē* 1978: 118.
[234] Jill Kamil (1991: 33) incorrectly assumed a second visit by Burckhardt in 1822, when he was

> '... some years since several men, God knows who they were, came to this country, visited the mountains, wrote down every thing, stones, plants, animals, even serpents and spiders, and since then little rain has fallen, and the game has greatly decreased.'

In August 1815 the diplomat William Turner (British, 1792-1867, at Hagia Koryphē on the 5th) was told the following:[236]

> 'In a season of extraordinary drought, they [the Bedouin] come in crowds to the convent and fire on it till the priests promise them to pray for rain. Once, after they had thus forced out these prayers, there came by chance such a heavy rain, that two Arabs and many camels were drowned in a mountain stream that it had swelled; on which a multitude of them came to fire on the convent, believing that this misfortune had resulted from the malice of the monks, who had denounced a curse on them, instead of involving a blessing.'

A similar story attributed the deadly flood of 1867 to over-praying for rain to Moses on Hagia Koryphē by shaykh Mūsā Nassir.[237] When excavation started on Hagia Koryphē in 1998, some of the Bedouin assumed that the research was aimed at finding the 'Book of Rain' – and indeed, a three-year drought was ended with heavy rainfall which created a shallow lake at the Prophētēs Hēlias basin (section 1.5.4).

2.3. Early buildings on Hagia Koryphē

The material record of human activity predating Justinian's basilica on Hagia Koryphē (560-65) is meagre.[238] Excavation in 1998 and 1999 gave few clues and the study of unglazed pottery and amphorae, portions of which may date from before the sixth century, is not yet published (section 1.2). A few glass

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already dead. She also thought that he was the witness of the eight hundred-strong Armenian pilgrim caravan mentioned by Anastasios eleven centuries earlier, see section 2.4.6.

[235] Burckhardt 1822: 519. On J. L. Burckhardt, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 241.

[236] Turner 1820: 447-8.

[237] Murray 1935: 153.

[238] It would be very interesting to examine the 'small store of copper coins found near the top of Jebel Musa,' thought to be 'the hoard of a pilgrim who had lost his clue to its hiding-place,' which A. Smith Lewis bought and briefly mentioned in her introduction to Ammonius 1912: x. What

sherds from bowls and fragments of a flat-based beaker datable between the fourth and the mid-fifth century are the only small finds from the period.[239] However, architectural features can safely be attributed to buildings before the basilica. Although no firm connection with datable pottery or coins could be established, their position seems to corroborate textual evidence for an earlier chapel on the summit (section 2.4).

The architectural features were concentrated to the north of the 1934 chapel of Hagia Triada, west of its small *parakella* and belfry (figures 8, 21, 22 and 23).[240] Immediately to the north of the *parakella*, a natural crevice in the rock is usually identified with the cave where Moses hid in the presence of God (cave B). Excavation unearthed remains of three walls (figures 8, 21, 22 and 23): Wall T1, on an E-W axis, is the northern wall of the sixth-century basilica and is built of well-dressed red granite blocks. Wall T6, on a N-S direction, is built of gray granite boulders. Finally, wall T7, on an E-W axis, measures an impressive 1 m in width and it is built from the same large blocks of gray granite as wall T6. Both walls T6 and T7 were consolidated with mud mortar and founded on the natural bedrock.

The stratigraphy was elementary, consisting of a surface layer, a fill of fine sand, stones and decomposed plaster and a third layer of reddish earth which probably was the original construction fill to level the natural bedrock. Unfortunately, the erection of the chapel of Hagia Triada in 1934 and the

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period these coins date to, where they were found and where they are today remains unknown.

[239] Panayotidi & Kalopissi-Verti 2007: no pagination.

[240] For the excavation on Hagia Koryphē during 1998 (April-May and October) and 1999 (May and October) and the uncovering of these early building phases, see sections 1.1 and 6.1. See also Panagiōtidē *et al.* 1998: 14, 21-3, 35; Panagiōtidē *et al.* 1999b, 10-1, 14-5; Panagiōtidē *et al.* 2000: 6,

surrounding courtyard and enclosure wall disturbed archaeological strata down to the bedrock in most places and no secure pottery data were recovered.

Walls T6 and T7, built of hard gray granite, evidently formed the northwestern corner of a building that predated the basilica, to which the red granite wall T1 belonged. Gray granite is the local stone of Hagia Koryphē, whereas red granite was quarried from the area of Prophētēs Hēlias at its foot, 250 m below.[241] Red granite was used extensively by the sixth-century builders, but the local material and position of walls T6 and T7 distinguishes them as belonging to a different building project. This conclusion is further supported by the presence of a fine white plaster layer on the northern face of wall T7 (against which the southern face of wall T1 rested) and on the western face of wall T6. The coating of wall T7 would be meaningless if wall T1 was already in place. Therefore, it was not a coating of the interior of wall T1, but of the exterior of an earlier building outlined by walls T6 and T7.

Limestone for the production of plaster was probably from the immediate vicinity, while richer deposits appear within a 100 km radius of Hagia Koryphē (section 1.5.2).[242] The appearance of the early building must have been quite similar to that of the pre-1934 chapels on Hagia Koryphē (figures 58, 59, 119, 121, 123, 124, 128 and 136).[243] It seems that plastering was widespread practice

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12; Panagiōtidē *et al.* 2002: 69-73, 75-7; Kalopissi-Verti 2006: 279-80. See also *Egeria* 2008: 80.

[241] Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 208; Panagiōtidē *et al.* 2002: 73 note 20. Interestingly, both the fortress and basilica of the Monastery were built of red granite.

[242] Ten lime kilns have been identified near monastic settlements in South Sinai; see Dahari 2000: 163.

[243] The chapel had reportedly been whitewashed in 1867-68; see Palmer 1871: 132. The possibility that walls T6 and T7 actually belonged to a later chapel rather than a pre-Justinianic edifice had to be rejected after careful measuring. In addition, anyone building on the summit after the collapse

in South Sinai and it appears on several Early Christian structures on Horeb.[244] Building blocks of the sixth-century basilica on Hagia Koryphē retain fine plaster coating (section 3.3, figure 51).

It is not possible to delineate the southern half of this early building, since it is buried under the chapel of Hagia Triada. The rock under which cave B is situated sets the farthest possible east end of the edifice to less than 4 m to the east of wall T6 (its western limit). Actually, wall T7 has been uncovered to a total length of just 2.14 m. No trace of the building was found in the corresponding trench to the south of the chapel. Therefore, its N-S dimension was between 3 and 8 m.

The sixth-century account of the Piacenza pilgrim (section 2.4.5) mentioned a building 'having six feet, more or less, in length and in breadth.' If this was true, the ground-plan of the building was square. He probably made his calculations in Roman feet (0.296 m) and could have referred to the interior dimensions of the building, 1.77 x 1.77 m. Given the substantial thickness of wall T7 (1 m) and of its southern equivalent, it is possible that the interior of this early building was a maximum of 2 x 2 m, remarkably close to the pilgrim's measurement. Therefore, a building with exterior dimensions of 4 x 4 m (maximum), built of gray granite blocks and coated with white plaster was the first structure archaeologically identified on Hagia Koryphē (Building A).

At a yet unspecified date, wall T7 was extended to the west (wall T7b). The western end of this extension was located in May 1999. Wall T20, of undressed

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of the sixth-century basilica would use the plentiful blocks of red granite left behind, rather than carve new blocks out of the very hard local granite.

[244] Finkelstein 1985: 42-60; Finkelstein 1993: 337.

stones, ran on a N-S axis and was well joined with wall T7b,[245] therefore it belonged to the same phase. Again, the external faces of both walls (northern for wall T7b and western for wall T20) were covered with white plaster. This extension postdated Building A. Whether the walls enclosed a roofed space or formed a sort of courtyard to the west of Building A, one cannot tell, although the Piacenza pilgrim noted only Building A as a closed space. The new space (Space B) measured approximately 4 m E-W. Its N-S dimension can only be guessed at.

A final pre-sixth-century phase was discovered in 1999 with the demolition of the footpath round the courtyard of the 1934 chapel. A further extension of wall T7 to the west, wall T7c, similar to wall T7b, joined wall T18 running N-S and created Space C, to the west of Space B. The latter appears to have been an open area.

By the time a decision was taken to erect a basilica on the summit of Hagia Koryphē in the mid-sixth century, three building phases were already concluded. The resulting complex measured more than 17 m E-W. Its width (N-S) cannot be measured with accuracy owing to later building works which obliterated traces. The complex consisted of one or two rooms and one or two courtyards to the west.

The different phases of this early complex were separated by indeterminate lengths of time and its function cannot be proven conclusively. Was it a Christian chapel or an even earlier building and of what nature? The evidence for peak structures in South Sinai is scarce, but two examples can be used in comparison. The Nabatean peak sanctuary at Jabal Mu'tamr, near Pharan

[245] In Panagiōtidē *et al.* 2002: 75-7 both T7b and T7c were mentioned as T7′.

(figures 24 and 25),[246] was investigated several times between 1868 and 1976.[247] It consisted of an open-air circular *temenos* (5 m in diameter) with several inscriptions carved on its building blocks (figure 25).[248] A smaller Nabatean temple stood on the almost inaccessible summit of the nearby Jabal Sirbāl, with two concentric enclosures and a court below.[249] The two sanctuaries must have been related, although in what way remains unknown.[250]

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[246] There is another mount named Jabal Mu'tamr near Horeb, to the east of the Monastery (Hagioi Theodōroi, figures 4 and 14 – a third Jabal Mu'tamr is in West-Central Sinai; see Ball 1916: 97). E. H. Palmer considered the possibility of either the Horeb or the Pharan Jabal Mu'tamr summits being the 'Mount of the Law' and rejected it. He also suggested that the Horeb one had been named 'Jabal Mu'tamr' after Hagia Koryphē, which was originally called 'Jabal Mu'tamr,' was baptised 'Jabal Mūsā.' Therefore, the place name was transferred to the lower summit of Hagioi Theodōroi; see Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 111 note 5, 203, 275-6; Palmer 1871: 5-6, 135-6; Negev 1977a: 230. Palmer also recorded the veneration of the Pharan Jabal Mu'tamr by the Bedouin, which indeed continued until the 1970s; see Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 62; Palmer 1871: 173-4; Negev 1977a: 230-1. There was an annual pilgrimage to the summit, associated with the sheep-slaughtering feast for celebrating the averted sacrifice of Ishmael; see Taylor 2001: 170. Avraham Negev mentioned that the local people ascribed its sanctity to the presence of a footprint of Moses' camel. Interestingly, a footprint of a prophet's camel (Muḥammad's or – more possibly – Nabī Sālih's) is an object of Bedouin veneration at Hagia Koryphē and offerings are made to it; see Anastase 1902b: 45-6 note 3; Meistermann 1909: 148, 148 note 2; Eckenstein 1921: 49-50, 124-7; Skrobucha 1966: 55-7. J. Daumas (1951: 88-9 note, 378) proposed the identification of Nabī Sālih with Moses – an idea that was first put forward by E. H. Palmer; see Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 66-7. Negev also considered the possibility of Jabal Mu'tamr in Pharan being the original 'Mount of the Law,' but he was inconclusive on that issue; see Negev 1977a: 231. Pierre Maraval suggested that the Piacenza pilgrim (section 2.4.5) probably referred not to Hagia Epistēmē but to Hagioi Theodōroi when he wrote of 'Horeb' and the pagan rites carried out at it; see Égérie 1982: 139 note 1. In that case, it would be possible that a pagan cult was indeed practised on Hagioi Theodōroi and that there was some sort of connection with the Pharan peak sanctuary of the same name, which perhaps denoted an ancient sacred place. However, a survey on Hagioi Theodōroi in March 2002 gave no evidence of structures predating the present chapel and no inscriptions were found; a similar absence of early remains on Hagioi Theodōroi was noted in Dahari 2000: 54.

[247] First mentioned in Burckhardt 1822: 612.

[248] Negev 1977a, 219-20, figure 1; Cohen 1979; Evenari *et al.* 1982: 346; Negev 1986: 116-118; Dahari 2000: 7; Taylor 2001: 168-70; Briend 2003: 2008-9. Avraham Negev collected all the earlier references (Negev 1977a: 219 notes 1, 2, 3) and published the ground-plan drawn by Shabatai Levi and Avner Goren in summer 1976. Ever since the nineteenth century, it was clear that the place was a sanctuary due to the large number of holders of sacerdotal names in the inscriptions, the 'largest single such concentration in Sinai,' see Negev 1977a: 219-20, 220 note 5, 229; Negev 1982: 25. On other open-air sanctuaries dating as far back as the sixth millennium BC, see Avner 1984: 119-26.

[249] Negev 1986: 117-8; Dahari 2000: 7.

[250] According to Avraham Negev, the Jabal Sirbāl sanctuary was the realm of the deities and the Jabal Mu'tamr was the pilgrims' destination; see Negev 1986: 118.

There is no similarity whatsoever between the early building on Hagia Koryphē and the Pharan sanctuaries. Furthermore, there is no evidence for Nabatean presence on Hagia Koryphē. Although high places around the Nabatean capital of Petra were approached with well-cut flights of steps,[251] the 'Path of Moses' has been altered so many times since the Early Christian period that a clear idea of how it would have appeared (had it been carved before the Christians came) is impossible.[252] Its steps are less impressive than the Petra ones and they were built rather than carved out of the rock, a practice that required greater investment of manual labour. Furthermore, had the steps been in place in 383 when Egeria climbed Hagia Koryphē, she would probably have used them instead of the western path (section 2.4.1) – but this is an *argumentum ex silentio*. No Nabatean pottery was recognised among the excavation finds and no 'Sinaitic' inscriptions have been located on the summit, although there are some at the foot of Horeb.[253] In conclusion, although the Nabatean presence would be a tempting solution to the problem of Hagia Koryphē's Biblical identification,[254] it is not supported by evidence.

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[251] On several 'private' and 'public' Nabatean high places in Petra, especially the High Place on the Attuf Ridge, and their importance, see Magnusson 1977: 217; Browning 1994: 43-4, 47, 180, 198, 209-16, 228, 234-5.

[252] A sixth- to seventh-century inscription on an arch above them gives a *terminus ante quem* for their creation; see section 1.5.3.

[253] Christian and Muslim inscriptions, carved by pilgrims, abound on Horeb, as was humorously noted by E. H. Palmer (1871: 106-7). For a comprehensive *corpus*, see Stone 1992a: 31-5, 37, 38, 42, 45; Stone 1992b: 138, 159, 183 (for Greek, Armenian, Arabic and unidentified inscriptions and various scratches and graffiti). It is possible that inscriptions were erased as 'pagan' and such a practice was recorded elsewhere in Sinai; see Rothenberg 1971: 19.

[254] The sanctity of both Hagia Koryphē and Hagia Aikaterinē to the Nabateans has been suggested as a good reason for their importance to Christian anchorites; see Aharoni 1961: 170; Negev 1986: 116.

The ground-plan and orientation of Building A and Spaces B and C resemble a Christian building, a chapel looking east with associated courtyard(s) to the west. Textual evidence supports this assumption. In the early accounts of Egeria, Theodoret and the Piacenza pilgrim, a chapel was specifically described [Latin: *ecclesia* (church) in Egeria, Greek: *thysiastērion* (altar) in Theodoret and Latin: *oratorium* (oratory) in the Piacenza pilgrim, see sections 2.4.1, 2.4.2 and 2.4.5].[255] Had there been a pagan sanctuary there, it would have been mentioned by these visitors, like the one on 'Horeb' (either Hagia Epistēmē or Hagioi Theodōroi) mentioned by the Piacenza pilgrim. The early building phases at Hagia Koryphē belong to a chapel built, according to Theodoret's fifth-century *History of the Monks of Syria* (section 2.4.2), by the Syrian Julian Saba between 360 and 367.

2.4. Early sources on Hagia Koryphē

In addition to material remains, textual evidence contributes to the understanding of the Hagia Koryphē landscape during the early stages of its formation. Apart from providing further insights into the morphology of structures on the summit, texts record the experiences of visitors and explain the ways in which the place was perceived and used. The examination of these accounts will reveal a number of standard themes. In the concluding section 2.5, they will be combined with the archaeological evidence to create a 'portrait' of pre-Justinianic Hagia Koryphē.

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[255] M.-J. Lagrange, F. Nau, B. Meistermann, Hélène Pétré, J. Daumas and Pierre Maraval misunderstood the succession of buildings on Hagia Koryphē (Lagrange 1897: 118-20; Anastase 1902b: 10-1 note 5; Meistermann 1909: 149-51, figure 33; Éthérie 1948: 34, 104 note 1; Daumas 1951: 378; Égérie 1982: 132 note 1; Maraval 1985: 309, 309 notes 471, 472). The chapel the nun witnessed must have been the earlier one, also referred to by the Piacenza pilgrim (section 2.4.5), but

Horeb was included in pilgrim itineraries since the Early Christian period.[256] In *On Holy Land Sites* (*circa* 518 / 530), attributed to Theodosius, distances to it were given:[257]

> 'The city of Paran near Mount Sinai is where Saint Moses fought Amalek. It is three staging-posts from Jerusalem to Elusa, and seven from Elusa to Aila, a city constructed by Alexander the Great, the Macedonian. It is eight staging-posts from Aila to Mount Sinai, if you choose the short way across the desert, but twenty-five if you go through Egypt.' **(Text XV)**

'Mount Sinai' appeared as a mass of earth-coloured *tesserae* on the mosaic map of Madaba in Jordan[258] [dated between 560 and 565 – contemporary with the basilica on Hagia Koryphē – and based on Eusebios' *On (Place)names*[259]] without an inscription clearly identifying it (figure 26). It also appeared on the eighth

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the three-aisled basilica was a Justinianic building, built after he went there (section 3.3).

[256] On the phenomenon of Early Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land and the conditions under which it was developed, see Wilkinson 1977: 15-32; Coleman & Elsner 1995: 78-99; Wilken 1996. In the *Bordeaux Itinerary* (probably around 333), written by an unnamed pilgrim from Bordeaux in present-day France, a spring was mentioned on 'Mount Syna,' which apparently is not the one in South Sinai but another one near Caesarea, although there are several springs on Horeb and around its foot:

> 'There [that is, at Caesarea] is the Bath of Cornelius the centurion, who gave much alms. At the third milestone from there is Mount Syna, where there is a spring, and women who wash in it become pregnant.' **(Text XIV)**

English translation in Egeria 1971: 153. On the Bordeaux pilgrim, see Wilkinson 1977: 1; Wilken 1996: 124-7; Bowman 2001; Briend 2003: 2083. On the identification of 'Mount Syna,' see Egeria 1971: 153-4 note 7.

[257] English translation in Wilkinson 1977: 70. On the date and sources of the work, see Wilkinson 1977: 184-91. For the value of various measurements given in these early works, see Wilkinson 1977: 16-20. See also Stone 1982a: 28-9.

[258] The Madaba map, discovered in 1884, was first published by Kleopas Koikylidēs (1897: 20-1 for the Sinai desert), who studied its remains in December 1896. Interestingly, he mentioned that the then Chief Secretary of the Holy Sepulchre, Archimandrite Phōtios Peroglou, had read about this mosaic map in manuscripts kept at the Monastery of Saint Catherine, Sinai, many years ago but could not remember the specific work (Koikylides 1897: 10) – perhaps he referred to the letter to Olympiodoros by Saint Nilos; see Nilus 1860b: 577-80, Greek with Latin translation. The most complete study of the map remains the one by Michael Avi-Yonah (1954: 43, plates 5, 10). For an extensive bibliography and excellent photographs, see Donner & Cüppers 1977: XI-XVI for the bibliography, 25 and 27 for the earliest (1897) photographs of the Sinai portion by J. Germer-Durand, 73 for the same portion before and 160 for the same portion after the 1965 restoration. See also Fontaine 1955: 56-9; Cosmas 1968: 148-50; Wilkinson 1977: 7; Piccirillo 1993: 26-33, 91; Bowersock 1996: 171-86, especially 184 for Sinai and 172 for the sources of the map.

[259] Avi-Yonah 1954: 28-32.

portion of the *Tabula Peutingeriana* (twelfth to thirteenth century, probably reproducing a fourth-century map), with the following caption:[260] '[in red letters] Mount Sinai [in black letters] where they received the law in mount Sinai.' **(Text XVI)**. The latter work clearly depicted the road network of the Roman Empire, with some further additions of Christian interest like Mount Sinai, and probably belonged to a series of maps directly related to textual itineraries which do not survive.[261] It was on this road network that the first pilgrims to Sinai travelled from as early as the fourth century.

2.4.1. Egeria

The earliest and indeed the most extensive surviving account of a visit to Hagia Koryphē from the early part of its history was given by Egeria, probably a Spanish nun of noble origin.[262] Her text has been widely published and researched following its discovery in 1884.[263] She visited Horeb between November 383 and January

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[260] Author's translation. On Agrippa's map, see Kubitschek 1919: 2100-11. On the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, see Ritter 1866: 22-7; Kubitschek 1919: 2126-44; Eckenstein 1921: 94-5; Fontaine 1955: 54-5; Bosio 1983: 50, 76-7 (for '*mons Syna*' and a colour reproduction of the relevant portion), 165-74 (for the date); Dahari 2000: 9-10; Briend 2003: 2085. Horeb is depicted like a white cloud, not unlike the rest of the mountains; see Bosio 1983: 47.

[261] Bowersock 1996: 167-71, especially 168 for the reference to Sinai.

[262] It seems that it was not unusual for ladies of high rank to undertake such laborious and dangerous itineraries. Another pilgrim to Sinai, between April 592 and August 594, was the patrician lady Rusticiana, accompanied by her daughter; see the letter addressed to her by pope Gregory I in August 594 in Gregorius 1891: 279-80; see also Eckenstein 1921: 131; Labib 1961: 22-3; Skrobucha 1966: 35-6.

[263] For the story of Egeria's manuscript (first discovered in 1884 by G. F. Gamurrini; see Silvia 1887: 35-44 for the section on Horeb) and its previous editions and translations, see Eckenstein 1921: 114-5; Egeria 1971: 7-8, 300-3. The most commonly used English translation is by John Wilkinson (Egeria 1971), although the earlier one (Silvia 1897: 11-5 for Hagia Koryphē) is also useful. The Latin passages are quoted from Égérie 1982: 120-49, whereas earlier editions (Éthérie 1948: 96-119, Egeria 1960: 1-8; Egeria 1965: 37-45) were also studied. The text is very popular and Spanish and Portuguese translations have also been published and were consulted; see Exeria 1991: 41-53; Egéria 1998: 78-99; see also Eckenstein 1921: 114-20 (incorrectly dating Egeria's journey to the mid-fifth

384 and must have ascended Hagia Koryphē on Sunday 17 December 383.[264] Visits by Julian Saba and Symeon the Elder probably predated that of Egeria but their accounts are lacking in both detailed descriptions and general information. Valerius of Bierzo (*circa* 680) was one of the first to comment on her account, but he gave no further details of the ascent of Hagia Koryphē.[265] The earlier part of Egeria's journey (the narrative of which does not survive) can be reconstructed using the *Book of the Holy Places* of Petrus Diaconus (section 2.1).[266]

Egeria approached Hagia Koryphē from the west. She ascended to it not from Wādī 'l-Dayr,[267] as was customary in later times, but from Wādī al-Lajā' and most probably from the hermitage of Hagioi Tessarakonta.[268] The precipitous ascent, probably on Jabal Fara' at first (figures 3, 27 and 28),[269] was followed by a steep descent, only to be resumed towards Hagia Koryphē itself.[270]

> 'From here we were looking at the Mount of God; our way first took us up it, since the best ascent is from the direction by which we were approaching, and then we would descend again to the head of the valley (where the Bush was), since that is the better way down.' **(Text XVII)**
>
> 'They are hard to climb. You do not go round and round them, spiralling up gently, but straight at each one as if you were going up a wall, and then straight down to the foot, till you reach the foot of the central mountain,

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century); Amantos 1953: 9; Fontaine 1955: 55-6; Labib 1961: 17-22; Champdor 1963: 14-8; Forsyth 1968: 3-4; Huber 1979: 206-8; Shahîd 1984b: 295-7; Finkelstein 1985: 41; Tsafrir 1993c: 327; Chitty 1995: 71, 168; Wilken 1996: 127-30; Dahari 2000: 20, 29; Briend 2003: 2080. On Egeria, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 242.

[264] Éthérie 1948: 14-6; Devos 1967: 188-94; Egeria 1971: 29; Égérie 1982: 120 note 1.

[265] See the relevant passage from Valerius' *Epistola Beatissime Egerie...* in Égérie 1982: 340-3, also published in Férotin 1903: 19-22.

[266] Petrus 1965: 100-3 (chapter Y), for the journey towards Sinai (previously published in Silvia 1887: 142-3); see also Eckenstein 1921: 115; Devos 1967: 192-3. On Petrus, see Amann 1933; Grossmann 2002: 43-4, 44 note 89; Briend 2003: 2083.

[267] She saw there a church 'at the place of the Bush' (4.6-8).

[268] Egeria 1971: 213-4; Égérie 1982: 125-7 note 4.

[269] There is considerable difference between the paths proposed by Maraval (figure 27) and Wilkinson (figure 28); see Maraval 1985: 309 note 469.

[270] English translation in Egeria 1971: 91, 93-4.

> Sinai itself. Here then, impelled by Christ our God and assisted by the prayers of the holy men who accompanied us, we made the great effort of the climb. It was quite impossible to ride up, but though I had to go on foot I was not conscious of the effort – in fact I hardly noticed it because, by God's will, I was seeing my hopes coming true.' **(Text XVIII)**

Once on the summit itself, Egeria noticed a church...[271]

> '... which is now there is not impressive for its size (there is too little room on the summit), but it has a grace all of its own.' **(Text XIX)**

She was greeted there by an elder (Latin, from the Greek: *presbyter*) appointed to the church, who came to meet her group from his cell.[272]

> 'All there is on the actual summit of the central mountain is the church and the cave of holy Moses. No one lives there.' **(Text XX)**

> 'They [the holy men] showed us the cave where holy Moses was when for the second time he went up into the Mount of God and a second time received the tables of stone after breaking the first ones when the people sinned. They showed us all the other places ...' **(Text XXI)**

> 'From there we were able to see Egypt and Palestine, the Red Sea and the Parthenian Sea (the part that takes you to Alexandria), as well as the vast lands of the Saracens – all unbelievably far below us.' **(Text XXII)**

The information Egeria provided is very important for understanding how Hagia Koryphē was approached and perceived at such an early date. There was a specific itinerary, taking pilgrims up the summit from a particular path. On their way back, they followed a different path, in all probability the one still in use today, down to Wādī 'l-Dayr.

Franca Mian alternatively suggested that, on her descent from Hagia Koryphē, Egeria followed a path to the foot of Hagia Zōnē and that the place of the

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[271] English translation in Egeria 1971: 94. Egeria employed the word *ecclesia*, which was broadly used throughout her account to signify a church of any dimension; on the usage of the word, see Vermeer 1965: 100-4. Albert Champdor confused the Burning Bush chapel with the Hagia Koryphē one in Egeria's text; see Champdor 1963: 14.

[272] English translation in Egeria 1971: 94-5.

Burning Bush was not where the Monastery stands today but further north.[273] Pierre Maraval accepted the likelihood of a different path down the mountain but correctly rejected the idea of the locality of the Bush having changed.[274] The architect who erected the fortress in the mid-sixth century compromised its defensive ability in order to contain the holy place of the Burning Bush within its walls (sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2).[275] Had it been possible for the locality to shift a few hundred metres to the west, the much more protected foot of Hagia Zōnē would have been preferred. It is improbable that such a venerated place changed location within 150 years.

On Hagia Koryphē a *presbyter*, who must have been living nearby, serviced a small chapel. Other holy men[276] lived all over the mountain but not on the summit. However, they probably held their Sunday celebration there.[277] These holy men were willing to accompany visitors and offer them hospitality.[278] They also were able to identify locations mentioned in the Scriptures, for example 'the cave of Moses' (probably cave A[279]) and, later in the text, several others on the foot and around the mountain (4.4-5.10). Therefore, it is evident that a 'holy topography' had already been created by the late fourth century, centred on Hagia Koryphē.[280]

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[273] Mian 1970: 222-3, map on page 210.
[274] Égérie 1982: 126-7 note 4.
[275] Forsyth *et al.* 1973: 6; Mayerson 1978: 34, 37; Tsafrir 1993b: 14; Tsafrir 1993c: 328.
[276] Egeria used the Greek word for 'ascetic,' transcribed in Latin as '*ascitis*,' to denote hermits living in the strictest possible solitude. Pierre Maraval claimed she evidently considered it a local term; see Égérie 1982: 133 note 3. However, it seems that Hélène Pétré's view that Egeria was just unfamiliar with the term is more plausible; see Éthérie 1948: 87, 104-5 note 2. See also Vermeer 1965: 15; Exeria 1991: 46 note 10; Egéria 1998: 85 note 11.
[277] Egeria 1971: 214; Égérie 1982: 133 note 4.
[278] Devreesse 1940: 208-11.
[279] Egeria 1971: 214; Égérie 1982: 133 note 5.
[280] Skrobucha 1966: 27-8; Egeria 1971: 18; Bowman 2001: 8-10.

2.4.2. Theodoret

The *History of the Monks of Syria* by Theodoret, bishop of Cyrrhus, composed in the mid-fifth century, narrated the life of Julian Saba (died 367[281]) and other Syrian monks.[282] Julian, who became famous as a holy man in the desert of Osrhoene,[283] found refuge in Horeb from his numerous admirers in the years between 360 and 367. He followed a route as far away as possible from settlements thanks to an ingenious method of collecting water using a sponge on a stick.[284]

> 'To escape [being honoured] – for he became conspicuous to all and drew to himself through fame the lovers of the good – he finally set out for Mount Sinai with a few of those closer to him, entering no city or village but making passable the impassable desert. They carried on their shoulders the necessary food – I mean bread and salt – and also a cup made from wood and a sponge tied to a piece of string, in order (if ever they found the water too deep) to draw it up with the sponge, squeeze it into the cup, and so drink it. Accordingly, after completing a journey of many days, they reached the mountain they longed for, and having worshiped their own Master[285] passed much time there, thinking the deserted character of the place and tranquillity of soul supreme delight. On this rock, under which Moses the leader of the prophets hid when he was counted worthy to see God, in so far as it is possible to see him, Julian built a church and consecrated an altar of God, which has remained to this day, and so returned to his own wrestling-school.' **(Text XXIII)**

When in South Sinai, he encountered a dignitary of the Church (a 'despot,' bishop) and spent a long time there.[286] On the rock under which Moses sheltered

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[281] Théodoret 1977: 245 note 2.
[282] Greek text and French translation in Théodoret 1977: 222-5, 354-7; for an English translation, see Theodoret 1985: 29, 67, 35 note 10, 68 note 5; German and Italian translations in Theodoret 1926: 42-3, 78; Teodoreto 1986: 59-60, 100; on the date of the *History of the Monks of Syria*, see Théodoret 1977: 30-1. See also Eckenstein 1921: 98-9; *Perigraphē* 1978: 141-2; Dahari 2000: 21, 28-9; Panayotidi & Kalopissi-Verti 2007: no pagination.
[283] Theodoret 1985: 35 note 1; Chitty 1995: 168; *Synaxis* 1998: 158-9; Grossmann 2002: 20 note 19 (dating the visit to *circa* 368). The Osrhoene desert was to the north of Mesopotamia.
[284] English translation in Theodoret 1985: 29. On the method of collecting water, see Théodoret 1977: 223 note 1.
[285] It seems from R. M. Price's translation that 'the Master' is God. However, the Greek text is better translated as 'the local (resident) bishop.'
[286] Egeria, visiting Horeb some years later, did not mention such a dignitary. There might have been a bishop in Pharan from the fourth century onwards, evidently presiding over the whole area.

in the presence of God, he built a church (Greek: *ekklēsian*) and dedicated an altar (Greek: *thysiastērion*),[287] which survived to Theodoret's time.[288] The account located Julian's church on top of cave B (see figure 8: O). The term 'stone' or 'rock' (Greek: *petra*) used when referring to the church's location could mean collectively the whole of the summit, but archaeological research corroborated the text by placing Building A next to cave B (section 2.3).[289]

Another Syrian who, according to Theodoret, visited Horeb and Hagia Koryphē was Symeon the Elder (to be distinguished from Symeon the Stylite), who died *circa* 390 or perhaps before 380.[290] His account gave little information, but constituted the first mention of an individual actually spending a whole week on the summit – albeit as a devotional exercise rather than a proper residence.[291]

> 'It is related that, when they reached the mountain they desired, this wonderful old man, on the very spot where Moses was counted worthy to see God and beheld him as far as was possible for human nature, knelt down and did not get up until he heard a divine voice announcing to him the Master's favor. He had spent the whole cycle of a week bent double in this way and taking not a scrap of food when the voice sounded and bade him take what was offered him and eat it willingly.' **(Text XXIV)**

By the sixth century Mount Sinai was put first in the title of the '*presbyter* and *apokrisarios* of the Holy Mountain of Sinai and the Desert of Raithō and the Holy Church in Pharan;' see Amantos 1953: 10. On the ecclesiastical office of *apokris(i)arios*, see Magdalino 1991b.

[287] Pierre Canivet noted that the word *thysiastērion* instead of *vōmos* in the Greek text stressed the Christian / Jewish origins rather than the pagan predecessors of the sacrificing practice; see Théodoret 1977: 224-5 note 2.

[288] Tsafrir 1993c: 327.

[289] Julian's pilgrimage to Sinai was also mentioned in two Syriac hymns by Ephraem the Syrian (born *circa* 306, died 373; see Baldwin & Ševčenko 1991) in honour of the Saint; see Ephraem 1972a: 61-2, 71-3 (for the Syriac original); Ephraem 1972b: 66-7, 75-7 (for a German translation); Dahari 2000: 28-9 (for a partial English translation); see also Chitty 1995: 168. The tradition remained alive in the Monastery and was recorded in Nektarios' *Epitome* (section 4.3.3); see Nektarios 1980: 208.

[290] Theodoret 1985: 68 note 1; see also Théodoret 1977: 365 note 1, where Pierre Canivet proposed a 375-380 date for his death, a view espoused by Dahari 2000: 28; Chitty 1995: 168.

[291] English translation in Theodoret 1985: 67. Also mentioned in the *Synaxarium of the Church of Constantinople* (*Synaxarium* 1902: 426_{7-12}, Mensis Ianuarius 26). Fasting was a frequent exercise among solitaries and some abstained from food on their way to Hagia Koryphē; see John 1992: 80-1.

The two passages in the *History of the Monks of Syria* refer to visits predating Egeria's, but only marginally add to the information given by her. However, they allow for a *terminus ante quem* of 360 to be set for an already strong tradition of pilgrimage to Hagia Koryphē and narrow the dates for the first Hagia Koryphē chapel to between 360 and 367.

2.4.3. Ammonios

The narrative attributed to the fourth-century Egyptian monk Ammonios from Canopus near Alexandria carries a fascinating history of philological and historical controversy.[292] Its Greek version, published in 1660 by François Combefis and never reprinted thereafter, is notoriously difficult to locate in libraries.[293] Another unpublished Greek version survives in what is probably a fourteenth-century manuscript in the library of the Monastery at Sinai (*Sinaiticus Graecus* 267).[294] A Syriac version of the seventh or the eighth century appears in the under-script of a palimpsest (upper-script in tenth-century Arabic).[295] I. Pomialovskiĭ studied a fourteenth-century Russian version (this text seems to have

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[292] For an early commentary, see Le Nain de Tillemont 1706: 574 (dating the raid to 373-374, probably following F. Combefis). See also Eckenstein 1921: 100-4 (a good English summary); Skrobucha 1966: 20-6 (an extensive English summary); Finkelstein 1985: 41; Maraval 1985: 71 note 38; Chitty 1995: 170-1; Dahari 2000: 22; Grossmann 2002: 35; Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 239.

[293] Shahîd 1984b: 297 note 47. It is available in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (Mayerson 1980: 134) and the Universities of Glasgow and Durham hold one and two copies respectively, which it has not been possible to consult so far.

[294] Mayerson 1980: 134, 134 note 7.

[295] Ammonius 1912: title page (for a portrait of a tenth-century moth pressed between its leaves, also xi), ix-x (for the date), 1-14 (for an English translation, mainly 3-4, 7-14), 2-53 (for the Syriac text); recently published and translated anew in *Forty Martyrs* 1996: 9-69.

been ignored by contemporary scholars).[296] An Italian translation from the Greek has also been published.[297] It was stated in the text that the original narrative was Coptic. Therefore the Greek and Syriac versions are considered to be contemporary translations.[298]

The two massacres mentioned in the text, one around Horeb and another at Raithō, were well known by the late eighth or the ninth century, when the earliest surviving Byzantine *proskynētarion* (Holy Land itinerary or guidebook) was written by Epiphanios.[299] Robert Devreesse attempted a critical approach to Ammonios' and 'Nilos'' texts (section 2.1), both of which probably referred to the same Horeb attack. He claimed that they were late sixth-century and fanciful fabrications by Sinai monks inspired by minor aggressions.[300] Ihor Ševčenko followed Devreesse and published a late sixth-century inscription on a marble slab in one of the chapels of the Monastery basilica referring to the Forty Martyrs of Horeb and thus supported the fabrication theory.[301] Vassilios Christides suggested a common source for both narratives.[302] Philip Mayerson opposed Ševčenko's reading of the inscription and gave a (plausible) alternative interpretation claiming some historical truth for the narratives.[303] Together with Irfan Shahîd he rejected the doubters' views and argued for a date for the raids

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[296] Ammoniia 1890: 2-5.
[297] Ammonio 1826: 10-12.
[298] Ammonius 1912: x; Devreesse 1940: 218.
[299] Epiphanius 1864: 265-8 (for Sinai), Greek with Latin translation; English translation in Wilkinson 1977: 119, 198-9 (for commentary). On Epiphanios, see Kazhdan 1991.
[300] Devreesse 1940: 216-22. For 'Nilos,' see section 2.1.
[301] Ševčenko 1966: 256 notes 3-5, 258, 263.
[302] Christides 1973: 44-5.
[303] Mayerson 1976: 377-9; Mayerson 1994: 238-9.

in Ammonios' text falling between 373 and 381 or in the 370s, perhaps connected with Mavia's revolt (375-78).[304]

It is possible that the attacks mentioned by Ammonios and 'Nilos' indeed took place in the late fourth or the fifth century, although the texts themselves date from the sixth or the seventh century and belong to the same group of texts as the *Narrations* of Anastasios, as was proposed by K. Amantos.[305] Whatever the case may be, they provide useful information on the life of the earliest desert fathers and their relationship with the Bedouin. Whether or not they date to the fourth-fifth or the sixth-seventh century, the information they provide is both first-hand and unique.

While describing a Saracen attack against fathers in the Horeb area, Ammonios referred to Hagia Koryphē as playing a role of protection:[306]

> 'And after a few days suddenly many of the Saracens fell upon us; because at that time the king of the Saracens had died, he who was the guardian of the desert. And they killed those of the fathers who were found in distant cells. But those who were dwelling in places near, when they heard (the commotion) fled to a certain fortress in the neighbourhood,[307] [together] with the Governor of the place, he whose name was Dulos; [...] And they killed in Geth-rabbi all those whom they found there; and in Choreb; and people in Codar; and all those whom they found near to the Holy Mountain.[308] [...] And He [God] commanded and a flame of fire was seen on the summit of the Holy Mount, and it was a wonder; and all the mountain {was smoking, and the fire bursting out up to the sky.[309] All being seized

[304] Mayerson 1978: 35-6; Mayerson 1980; Shahîd 1984b: 308-19, 327-8.
[305] Amantos 1953: 7-9, 8 note 5.
[306] English translation of the seventh- or eighth-century Syriac text in Ammonius 1912: 2. For brief discussions of this passage, see Mayerson 1980: 137-40; Shahîd 1984b: 312.
[307] The 'certain fortress' was probably the fourth-century tower in Wādī 'l-Dayr, mentioned by Eutychios (section 2.2). Philip Mayerson (1980: 138-9, 138-9 note 14) preferred to identify the fortress in Ammonios' text with a tower different from the one Eutychios mentioned – however, there are no reasons for such an assumption; see also Mayerson 1989: 75.
[308] Interestingly, Horeb ('Choreb') was differentiated from 'the Holy Mountain,' evidently Hagia Koryphē; see section 1.4.
[309] The description is very similar to the passage from *Exodus* (19: 18-9):

> 'Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the Lord descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, the whole mountain trembled violently, and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder.'

This and similar descriptions in the Pentateuch seem to derive from two different Biblical sources

> with terror, we became insensible through the fear of the vision. And falling on our faces, we worshipped God, and supplicated that He would carry us over the present necessity, which lay heavy on us, to a prosperous issue. Nay, even the Barbarians also, terrified by this new and unwonted sight, by a sudden impulse took to flight, many [of them] even leaving [their] arms with [their] camels, nor did they brook a moment's delay.}'

Apart from being inaccessible, the holiest of the Horeb sacred locations was also actively engaged in the protection of its worshippers, a role it would assume again at difficult instances in later centuries (sections 4.1 and 4.1.2).

2.4.4. Prokopios

In his important work *On Buildings*, published *circa* 560, Prokopios of Caesarea, the secretary of Justinian's general Belisarios (*circa* 500-565), devoted a very interesting passage to Hagia Koryphē.[310] Although his account focused on the Justinianic building project, some of his remarks touch upon issues covered in this chapter. Further mention of his work will be made in chapter 3:[311]

> 'In what was formerly called Arabia and is now known as 'Third Palestine,' a barren land extends for a great distance, unwatered and producing neither crops nor any useful thing. A precipitous and terribly wild mountain, Sina by name, rears its height close to the Red Sea, as it is called. [...] On this Mt. Sina live monks whose life is a kind of careful rehearsal of death, and they enjoy without fear the solitude which is very precious to them. [...] For it is impossible for a man to pass the night on the summit, since constant crashes of thunder and other terrifying manifestations of divine power are heard at night, striking terror into man's body and soul. It was in that place, they say, that Moses received the laws from God and published them.' **(Text XXV)**

A slight bewilderment lurks behind the admiration for the monks 'whose life is a kind of careful rehearsal of death' on the part of the well-bred urbanite. This

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(Yahwist and Elohist) that refer to volcanic phenomena (the first) and storms (the second); see Vaux 1978a: 432-3, 438.

[310] On Prokopios, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 248.

[311] English translation in Procopius 1971: 355-7; other English translations in Procopius 1886:

phrase is often quoted to demonstrate how hard the anchorites' life was and Philip Mayerson criticised it as being unsubstantiated.[312] However, no scholar seems to have noticed that it was borrowed from Plato's *Phaedo*, a dialogue well-known to educated people of Prokopios' time and popular with Christian theologians:[313]

> 'Suppose it [the soul] is separated in purity, while trailing nothing of the body with it, since it had no avoidable commerce with it during life, but shunned it; suppose too that it has been gathered together alone into itself, since it always cultivated this – nothing else but the right practice of philosophy, in fact, the cultivation of dying without complaint – wouldn't that be the cultivation of death?' **(Text XXVI)**

Therefore, the expression was formulaic (*topos*) and aimed to show the writer's erudition rather than the monks' hardship.[314] Prokopios referred to the fortress and its basilica (section 3.1.1) and went on to stress that the reason for not building it on the summit was the supernatural phenomena which were taking place there 'striking terror into man's body and soul.'[315] Thus, he once more affirmed the inaccessibility of Hagia Koryphē. However, at approximately the same time that his book was published, the summit basilica foundations must have been laid and either the phenomena were ignored or the sanctity of the place and the need to honour it surpassed fear.

146-7; Wilkinson 1977: 76; Prokopios also mentioned South Sinai (and Pharan in particular) in *History of the Wars*, I.xix.7-16 and II.iii.41; see Procopius 1979: 180-1, 280-3.

[312] Mayerson 1978: 35-6.

[313] English translation in Plato 1993: 32. For a brief discussion of the importance of this dialogue in Christian theology, see Plato 1993: ix. A comparison can be made with John Moschos: '...let the object of your philosophy be always to contemplate death...;' see John 1992: 130.

[314] On such *formulae*, see Cameron 1985: 96-7.

[315] These phenomena remind one of the 'mountain [...] smoking, and the fire bursting out up to the sky' of the seventh-century Syriac version of Ammonios' text on a Saracenic raid; see section 2.4.3.

2.4.5. The Piacenza pilgrim

Although the Piacenza pilgrim (in older editions named Antoninus – sometimes 'of Cremona') visited Hagia Koryphē after the fortress had been built (after 557 and before 560-65),[316] his account (*circa* 570) will be examined alongside pre-Justinianic texts, since it is pertinent to details of the architecture of the pre-basilical structure(s) and discusses pagan cult practices.[317]

> 'Thence we ascend unceasingly for three miles farther, to the topmost peak of the mountain, upon which is a small chapel [*oratorium*[318]], having six feet, more or less, in length and in breadth. In this no one is permitted to pass the night; but after the sun has risen, the monks [*monachi*[319]] ascend thither and perform the Divine Office. In this place many, out of devotion, cut off their hair and beard, and throw them away; and there I also trimmed and cut my beard.
> Mount Sinai is stony, with earth only in a few places. Round about it are the cells [*cellulae*[320]] of many servants of God, and likewise in Horeb. They say that Horeb means 'clean earth.' At one place upon the mountain, the Saracens have placed a marble idol of their own, as white as snow. There, also, dwells a priest of theirs, dressed in a dalmatic and pallium of linen. When the time of their festival arrives, as soon as the moon is up (before its rays have departed from the festival) that marble begins to change colour; as soon as the moon's rays have entered in, when they begin to worship the idol, the marble becomes black as pitch. When the time of the feast is over, it returns to its original colour – a great object of wonder to us all.'[321] **(Text XXVII)**

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[316] John Wilkinson (1977: 6-7) considered 570 to be the most plausible date for the writing of the account. The fact that the pilgrim did not mention Justinian's basilica on the summit means that he definitely visited Hagia Koryphē after 548 (the earliest possible date for the erection of the Monastery; see Ševčenko 1966: 256) but before 560-5, when the summit basilica was built. The latest Latin edition is Antoninus 1965a: 148-9, whereas earlier editions (Antoninus 1879a: 112-3; Antoninus 1889: 26-7) were also studied. See also Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 200-1; Eckenstein 1921: 125; Devreesse 1940: 214-5.; Fontaine 1955: 51-3 (erroneously dated the account to the third or the fourth century); Shahîd 1984b: 319-24; Finkelstein 1985: 41 (mentioned him as 'Antoninus'); Dahari 2000: 23, 30; Grossmann 2002: 37 note 69; Briend 2003: 2079.

[317] English translation in Antoninus 1897: 29-30.

[318] G. F. M. Vermeer (1965: 109-13) noted that the term '*oratorium*' was destined for modestly-sized sanctuaries of commemorative or private use or included within a monastery.

[319] On the usage of the terms '*monachus*' and '*monasterium*' to designate either a solitary hermit and his isolated refuge or a coenobite and the convent he shared with others, see Éthérie 1948: 102 note 1; Vermeer 1965: 128-31; Exeria 1991: 45 note 6 (X. Eduardo López Pereira actually translated '*monasterium*' as '*eremitorio*' into Spanish). However, whereas Egeria preferred the former meaning of the words, the Piacenza pilgrim used them in the latter sense.

[320] The term '*cellula*' for the Piacenza pilgrim denoted the private quarters of a single ascetic, either in a coenobium or in isolation. However, it seems that he preferred the term for hermitages, whereas he used '*monasterium*' for coenobiums; see Vermeer 1965: 131, 134.

[321] For a discussion of this passage, see Mayerson 1964: 187. A similar text can be found in

The Piacenza pilgrim added to Egeria's information an alternative itinerary (he went up Hagia Koryphē from the Justinianic fortress in Wādī 'l-Dayr, the way pilgrims still do today, route A) and the actual dimensions of the church on the summit, six by six feet (section 2.3).[322] Even in the sixth century, and while the community of anchorites at the foot of Hagia Koryphē had considerably increased, no one was allowed to reside on the summit. He added that, 'out of devotion,' many used to shave both hair and beard (a tradition unrecorded elsewhere). He then went on describing at length pagan ceremonies (stone-worship) of the 'Saracens' at an unspecified location on 'Horeb,'[323] which he probably identified with Hagia Epistēmē to the north of Wādī 'l-Dayr and not with Horeb.[324] He thus gave evidence for the survival of paganism well into the sixth century, two centuries after the coming of the first anchorites and only seven decades before the Muslim conquest (section 2.1).[325]

2.4.6. Anastasios

The *Various narrations of the humble monk Anastasios on the holy fathers of Sinai*, written around the third quarter of the seventh century, will also be discussed in reference to the Justinianic Hagia Koryphē basilica (section 3.1.3).[326]

Antoninus 1965b: 171; alternatively *De Locis Transmarinis Sacris Beati Antonini Martyris* in Antoninus 1879b: 131-2. On the second text, see Wilkinson 1977: 6-7.

[322] Exact measurement-taking often abounded in pilgrimage reports; see Turner & Turner 1978: 179.

[323] On stone-worship among the pre-Muslim Arabs, at high places in particular, see Browning 1994: 46-7, 210-2.

[324] Egeria 1971: 215. See section 1.4.

[325] K. Amantos (1953: 18-9, 19 note 1) proposed that the idol mentioned by the Piacenza pilgrim was one of Moses. For a discussion of the importance of the account for Arab paganism, see Shahîd 1984b: 319-24. See also Panayotidi & Kalopissi-Verti 2007: no pagination.

[326] The writer of these *Narrations* should not be confused with another seventh-century Anastasios,

However, some of the narrations relate to issues touched upon in this chapter, namely the inaccessibility of the place and the supernatural phenomena associated with it, and they will be analysed here. Anastasios, a monk at the Monastery who must have had John 'Klimax' as an abbot,[327] is a particularly interesting source, since he wrote out of personal experience in charming and unpretentious Greek and gave many reliable and lively details of the lives of the Sinai monks and of the way they viewed and experienced Hagia Koryphē.

In the second narration, Anastasios told the story of a young monk, apprentice to the *paramonarios* (alternatively *prosmonarios*, the overseer or 'concierge' of the church[328]) of the Hagia Koryphē basilica, who spent the night on the place and was punished for the rest of his life with something closely resembling partial paralysis after a stroke:[329]

> '... A brother, apprentice [*diakonētēs*] to the *paramonarios*, having neglected [the prohibition], hid inside the church saying that no harm (could] come on the person that would sleep there. The *paramonarios*, thinking that his disciple had already descended before him, having burned incense on the holy place and shut the doors, departed. During the night, the disciple that had hidden in the church woke up to tend the oil lamps; and when he arrived at the first lamp, the very flame he tended, by God's command, hurt his one side, and his entire half was paralysed from this time on, and one of his hands and one of his legs, and he remained half paralysed until he died.' **(Text XXVIII)**

Much better was the luck of a *paramonarios* who was forced to spend the night on Hagia Koryphē. He was miraculously transported to Rome and woke up in the Basilica of Saint Peter. The pope (probably Gregory I, served 590-604) kept

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writer of narratives as well and perhaps identified with Anastasios of Sinai; see Anastase 1902b: 8; Anastase 1903: 56-8; Caranikolas 1955; Chitty 1995: 171-2, 175-6; Dahari 2000: 23-4. John Haldon argued that the *Narrations* were all written by the same Anastasios, see Haldon 1992: 109-10.

[327] For dates of Anastasios' life and work, see Anastase 1902b: 3-6; Eckenstein 1921: 111-3; *Synaxis* 1998: 128.

[328] For the duties of *paramonarios,* see Magdalino 1991a.

him in Rome, ordained him bishop and offered to Sinai furnishings for a 'hospital,' in which Anastasios himself had served:[330]

> '... In the evening, it suddenly snowed heavily, so that the mountain of Hagia Koryphē was covered with three or four *pēcheis* (six or eight feet). And he [the *paramonarios*] was marooned on the summit and could not descend. In these years, no one dared sleep on Hagia Koryphē. While the *paramonarios* was praying, round about dawn, he fell asleep and transported by God he found himself in Rome in Saint Peter's. [...] By divine economy, he was found having in his belt the keys of the doors inscribed as 'of the Hagia Koryphē [holy summit] of Sinai.' **(Text XXIX)**

In this passage it is specified that nobody dared sleep on Hagia Koryphē 'in these years,' allowing the assumption that the prohibition was not as strictly adhered to in later years, when Anastasios was writing.

Supernatural phenomena, like the one described in the narrative by Ammonios (section 2.4.3), seem to have been common, not only in relation to hostile attacks against the monks but in the presence of pilgrims and the fathers themselves, too, like the Armenian *diakonētēs* in the following passage:[331]

> '... A *diakonētēs* at Hagia Koryphē named Elissaios, Armenian in origin, not once or twice but as if to say every night, because he was pure and worthy, he reported seeing fire on the holy church of the Godly lawgiving.' **(Text XXX)**

A pilgrim group of eight hundred Armenians[332] witnessed a much more impressive manifestation of divine power:[333]

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[329] Author's translation.
[330] Author's translation. See also section 2.2. The narration was very popular and survived in several sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Greek manuscript *proskynētaria* (pilgrim guidebooks); see *Proskynētaria* 2003: 74, 84-5, 91, 117, 147-8.
[331] Author's translation.
[332] For the presence of Armenians at Sinai, see sections 2.4.6 and 4.1.1. On this pilgrim group, see Stone 1982a: 35-6.
[333] Author's translation. For a discussion, see Eckenstein 1921: 126; Mayerson 1994: 239; Chitty 1995: 175. In the seventeenth-century *Epitome* of Nektarios (section 4.3.3) the reason for this phenomenon was the God's wrath because of the heretic Armenians celebrating mass at Hagia Koryphē's hallowed ground; see Nektarios 1980: 200.

> '... When they arrived at the outer holy rock where Moses received the law, a vision of God and terrible miracle happened in the holy place, and to all the people – just as in the ancient times of the giving of the law, the whole of Hagia Koryphē [holy summit) and these people seemed to be in the middle of fire. [...] After these people were surprised and chanted the 'Kyrie Eleison' for up to one hour, the fire subsided, and not even an eyelash of one of them was damaged nor a garment, but only their sticks like candles were lit during the vision, and then they were extinguished.' **(Text XXXI)**

Fires appearing on the summit relate, of course, to the descriptions of *Exodus* (section 2.4.3) and were often interpreted by witnesses as of divine origin. However, there is a series of meteorological phenomena which occur on a regular basis on the Sinai mountaintops: magnetic storms producing strong vibrations and flashes of light were experienced by the members of the archaeological team who lived for several weeks on Hagia Koryphē in 1998 and 1999.[334] Scientific knowledge allowed disassociating them from the supernatural, but they fit well into the frame of thought surrounding the place in the minds of believers of all periods.[335]

2.5. Conclusion

In the preceding pages a body of material and literary evidence was examined in order to provide insights into the ways Hagia Koryphē was perceived and experienced during the early centuries of its recorded history. The first question usually asked about the site, the possible reasons for its identification with the 'Mount of the Law,' lies beside the point of this research and an apocalyptic explanation

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[334] Peals of thunder were often connected with Hagia Koryphē; see Ritter 1866: 250; Hobbs 1995: 13-5.
[335] For Elbert Farman's (American, 1831-1911) experience of similar extreme phenomena in 1908, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 183-5. On E. Farman, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 242. A pilgrim in 1999 insisted in having experienced a wonderful, out-worldly scent on her way up to Hagia Koryphē, just like the fathers in Anastasios' first narration; see Anastase 1902a: 60-1. The abundant fragrant herbs (lavender, sage, mint and others) growing on Horeb could be the reason for such olfactory sensations, see Hobbs 1995: 19-20.

would be more in accordance with the character of the site and the beliefs of the third-century anchorites who brought the Biblical and the actual places together.

The ways in which the summit was perceived and used after this identification are historically more interesting and can be analysed through scholarly examination, contrary to the previous question. Texts seem to agree on a series of perceptions and practices and they will be briefly recapitulated here.

The summit was the *raison d' être* of the anchoretic community and the focal point of Sinaitic eremitic life. There is a remarkable archaeological clue as to the centrality of the site. Fourteen prayer niches, low semicircular or rectangular apses (average dimensions 2 x 2.5 m, original height 0.75 to 1 m) built of rough stone, are scattered around Horeb and most share the same characteristics.[336] Hagia Koryphē is readily visible from them and they are oriented towards it (figure 30).[337] They must have been used by anchorites and pilgrims for devotions and they have been circumstantially but convincingly dated to the Early Christian period.[338]

These niches bear witness to the pre-eminence of Hagia Koryphē among the other holy places of the Horeb sacred landscape which was already well-structured when Egeria visited in 383. This is hardly surprising, since the 'Mount of the Law' was the site of one of the most important theophanies in the Bible, the

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[336] Finkelstein 1981; Finkelstein 1985: 56; Finkelstein 1993: 338-9; Coleman & Elsner 1995: 211; Dahari 2000: 47. There are nine further niches on nearby mountains, most connected with a view of Horeb; see Finkelstein 1981: 87-90; Finkelstein 1993: 339.

[337] Chapels were also erected at spots affording a good view of Hagia Koryphē; see Dahari 2000: 46.

[338] More prayer niches have been identified in the vicinity of Jabal Umm Shūmar, not far from Horeb. They are different in construction and orientated towards the southeast (towards Mecca), therefore they are probably *mihrabs* rather than Early Christian prayer niches, as was suggested in Finkelstein 1985: 66, 66 note 27. The Hagia Koryphē prayer niches could also have been used as *mihrabs* at a later date (section 4.2.1).

God-trodden spot where a human, Moses, cast his eyes not on a manifestation of God but on His actual figure. He later received there the Decalogue from Him.

Hagia Koryphē participated in the polemical aspects of the anchorite-Bedouin co-existence (sections 2.2.1 and 2.4.3). The summit protected its worshippers and averted evil from them. To the Early Christian anchorite sacred locations were safe shelters in a basically hostile landscape of pagans and barbarians – and there were plenty of those around Horeb (section 2.1). Tellingly, in the work of 'Nilos,' mention was made of anchorites seeking refuge on Hagia Koryphē – a place which even the lawless and murderous Bedouin would not approach.[339] However, from the fourth century onwards the task of protecting the holy fathers seems to have gradually fallen on human shoulders and defensive structures were erected to this end like the tower near the Burning Bush (section 2.2).[340]

During the first centuries of its history, Hagia Koryphē was accessible to visitors but there was a restriction on spending the night there (sections 2.4.1-2, 2.4.4, 2.4.6).[341] This was relevant to the extensive prohibitions of access to the mountain in *Exodus* (19:12-13 and 20-24, 24:1-2, 34:3) and to the sanctity of a place touched by God.[342] Lina Eckenstein's suggestion that the anchorites were prevented from inhabiting the place due to the strong hold of the pagans on it was

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[339] Nilus 1860a: 631; Mayerson 1975: 62-3.
[340] Shahîd 1995b: 973-4.
[341] A fourth-century anchorite was reluctant even to ascend Hagia Koryphē:
> '... I climbed the height of Mount Sinai, the summit of which almost touches heaven and cannot be reached by human effort.' **(Text XXXII)**

English translation in Eckenstein 1921: 96.
[342] Peters 1996: 37-8.

based on a single sixteenth-century narrative and has to be rejected.[343] Many anchorites (perhaps numbering as many as one hundred[344]) gathered around it throughout Horeb but avoided the sacred summit itself. One of them, living close to Hagia Koryphē but not on it, was Stephen.[345] According to the seventh 'word' of the *Heavenly Ladder* (*Klimax*, early seventh century) by John 'Klimax,' he lived:

'… in his own cell on Hagia Koryphē [holy summit] …' **(Text XXXIII)**

The location of his cell is still venerated near Prophētēs Hēlias and the eighteenth-century chapel standing there seems to have been preceded by a much earlier structure.[346] Several other chapels, small monasteries, cells, paths, prayer niches but also water systems and fences around agricultural plots have been located on Horeb, but not on Hagia Koryphē (sections 2.2 and 3.4).[347]

The inaccessibility of holy places, the *avaton*, was common in cultic institutions since antiquity. Parts of church buildings were inaccessible to various groups of people or to all but the clergy on some occasions or at any time. It is hardly surprising that a similar limitation would be set up for Hagia Koryphē, associated as it was with supernatural phenomena, to further discourage trespassers (sections 2.4.3 and 2.4.4). In the exceptional circumstances when these rules were broken, the consequences ranged from the extraordinary (overnight transportation to Rome) to the detrimental (partial paralysis) for transgressors (section 2.4.6).

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[343] Eckenstein 1921: 127-8.
[344] Finkelstein 1985: 60; Finkelstein 1993: 340.
[345] Author's translation. For the Greek text and a Latin translation, see Joannis 1860a: 812-4; for another English translation, see John 1959: 120-1; see also section 2.2. On Stephen, see Nektarios 1980: 211-2; Eckenstein 1921: 112; *Synaxis* 1998: 189-90. Other anchorites also lived near but not on Hagia Koryphē; see Finkelstein 1993: 334; *Synaxis* 1998: 132.
[346] Ševčenko 1966: 257, 263; Dahari 2000: 45.
[347] Finkelstein 1993: 336-9; Dahari 2000: 38-49.

The early hermits dedicated a chapel to the holiest of their places, appropriately the only building on the place. Egeria mentioned Sunday celebration taking place there (section 2.4.1). If indeed the earliest building on Hagia Koryphē (Building A, see section 2.3) was the one erected by Julian Saba and mentioned in Theodoret's history (section 2.4.2), it seems that it was well taken care of and was extended in later years (Spaces B and C, see section 2.3). The modest character of these building projects was in accordance with the realities of the anchoretic community that created them, keeping their distance from the attention of the imperial government and the official Church leadership (section 2.2). The marginal character of these humble buildings would be altered with the Justinianic project of large-scale edifices.

Another sign of respect for the site, mentioned only in the sixth-century account of the Piacenza pilgrim (section 2.4.5), was the tonsuring of both beard and hair for every male who visited the site. It could be a further devotional exercise stressing the sanctity of the place. When John 'Klimax' was to receive his monastic tonsure in the late sixth century, he was taken up to Hagia Koryphē (section 3.4).

The emergence of the pilgrimage phenomenon from the fourth century (sections 2.4, 2.4.1-2, 2.4.5) encouraged the transformation of Horeb from a distant refuge inspired by a Biblical identification (third century) to a major monastic centre, important for both imperial and ecclesiastical politics (mid-sixth to early seventh century) (sections 2.2 and 3.4). Brief references in early itineraries illustrated Hagia Koryphē as if it was surrounded by wilderness (section 2.4) and Egeria's account reflected the same saintly simplicity (section 2.4.1). In the fifth century, the emperor Marcian addressed a letter to the Sinai anchorites (section 2.2).

By the mid-sixth century the Piacenza pilgrim (section 2.4.5) mentioned monks speaking three languages and in the early seventh century pope Gregory I made a substantial donation to the Monastery (sections 2.2 and 2.4.6). Even though sixth-century texts were less focused on Hagia Koryphē than in earlier centuries and mainly referred to monastic life, its importance had not diminished, as the seventh-century *Narrations* of Anastasios demonstrated (section 2.4.6).

Most importantly, what pilgrim accounts showed was the change in the way Hagia Koryphē was approached. Egeria climbed to it from the west, following a trail which is still there but rarely taken (section 2.4.1). On her way down she actually took the path later pilgrims (like the Piacenza pilgrim, see section 2.4.5) would follow on their way up. The approach to Hagia Koryphē had obviously changed between 383 and 560-65 and the popularity of the later choice in following centuries shows that it was not accidental. A prescribed way of experiencing the sacred landscape of Horeb crystallised in these two centuries and a set ascent route, complete with stepped pathway and arched gateways (section 1.5.3), was put in place. It featured the most interesting visitation spots in the sacred landscape: the Burning Bush, the cave of Elijah and the summit itself.

Although Hagia Koryphē changed after the Justinianic building programme, the approach to it remained the same for the rest of its history.[348] Access to it was

[348] For an analysis of the pilgrimage path around Horeb, see Coleman & Elsner 1995: 209-12. In this perceptive analysis a scheme was put together explaining the stations of the Sinai pilgrimage; however, archaeological facts were ignored, for example the presence of a basilica on the summit and the fact that when the Justinianic fortress was built, the *katholikon* was not submerged in relation to other buildings around it but only in relation to the entrance portal. Furthermore, the suggested 'descent' movement from the portal to the *katholikon*, supposedly enacted while the Monastery was being visited by pilgrims, was not intended to create an impression but was

gained through a physical and spiritual ascent from the site of the first divine manifestation to Moses (conveniently within a fortified enclosure) and through two gateways. One of them was named 'of Confession' (figure 15), probably at a later date, because pilgrims had to undergo this sacred mystery before crossing it.[349] This 'purification ritual' must have been inspired by *Psalm* 24:3-4:[350]

> 'Who may ascend the hill of the Lord, who may stand in his holy place?
> He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false.'

Several prayer niches aiming at Hagia Koryphē were dispersed around the abode of the second most important prophet, Elijah, also available for visitation. Finally, the cleansed and illuminated pilgrim reached the place of the ultimate theophany. The 'Path of Moses' was more than an ascent route. It was the prescribed initiation process for experiencing the 'Mount of the Law' in its fullness.

Thus, some of the major qualities of the place were already established by the mid-sixth century: sacredness, preeminence over other places within a hallowed landscape, protective role for worshippers, non-residential character further enhanced by devotional exercises and the erection of cultic structures, pilgrimage and a prescribed, almost processional itinerary of visitation.

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dictated by the location of the Burning Bush; see Forsyth 1968: 8.

[349] On the survival of this practice, see section 4.2.2; Hobbs 1995: 234.

[350] Champdor 1963: 51; Dansette 2001: 69. The connection was first encountered in the *Perigraphē* (first printed in 1710, the edition used here printed in 1817; see the reprint, *Perigraphē* 1978: 139-40).

3. IMPERIAL LANDSCAPE

The erection of a fortress protecting the site of the Burning Bush, of a basilica (*katholikon*) within its walls, of several adjacent structures of military, residential and industrial character and, finally, of a second basilica on the summit of Hagia Koryphē during the rule of the Byzantine emperor Justinian I (527-65), remains to this day the most ambitious and formative human intervention in the Horeb landscape. In true imperial fashion, the investment of human and material resources supported a multifaceted construct of religious devotion and political ideology and altered the ways the place was perceived and experienced ever after. The 1998-1999 excavation on Hagia Koryphē revealed the full extent of the sixth-century edifices and no future discussion of Justinianic Sinai can exclude them. On-going work outside the walls of the Monastery of Saint Catherine brings to light more units of mid- to late sixth-century date every year. They expand further the scale of the scheme and should be viewed as parts of the same imperial project.

This chapter will study all of Justinian's buildings in Horeb, examining the written sources first (section 3.1). A brief description of the fortress, the *katholikon* and the two enclosures in Wādī 'l-Dayr (section 3.2) will be followed by a detailed account of the Hagia Koryphē basilica (section 3.3) and previous studies on it (section 3.3.1). Finally, section 3.4 will examine the ways in which the Justinianic project changed the lives of the Horeb anchorites.

3.1. Sources on Justinian's buildings at Horeb

The era of Justinian was one of extensive building works throughout the empire, documented in detail by Prokopios in his *On Buildings* (sections 2.4.4 and 3.1.1). Much of what was being erected was of religious nature (churches, monasteries, pilgrim facilities), often combined with military and wider political agenda. The emperor's Holy Land programme, the most ambitious since the era of Constantine I, included both the erection of new structures (for example, the *Nea* – New – Church in Jerusalem, accompanied by two pilgrim hostels, 'hospitals') and the restoration of older, damaged buildings (for example, the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem).[351] The programme was initiated after the destructions of the 529 Samaritan revolt,[352] as an affirmation of imperial control in a land plagued by religious conflict. Similarly, a few years later, the crushing of the 532 'Nika' revolt in Constantinople would be sealed with the rebuilding at an unsurpassed scale of Hagia Sophia (532-7).

The interweaving of religious, military and political agenda in Justinian's building programmes was typical of Roman imperial policy. However, it was rarely as well documented (and as fiercely debated) as in the case of the fortress he erected at the foot of Horeb. Out of the plethora of references to the Horeb project, most stressed the direct involvement of the emperor. Some of the earlier Greek sources (contemporary in the case of Prokopios) and a couple of later ones in Arabic are discussed hereafter and it is upon these, as well as oral tradition, that later texts

[351] Maraval 1985: 70-1.
[352] Maraval 1985: 78-9.

relied. Inscriptions consolidating the evidence of authors and offering further clues are mentioned alongside the buildings they appear in (sections 3.2 and 3.3).

3.1.1. Prokopios

Interwoven with Prokopios' already analysed text from *On Buildings* (section 2.4.4), published *circa* 560, were the following lines on the erection of the fortress, the basilica and the *phylaktērion* at the foot of Horeb:[353]

> 'Since these monks had nothing to crave – for they are superior to all human desires and have no interest in possessing anything or in caring for their bodies, nor do they seek pleasure in any other thing whatever – the Emperor Justinian built them a church which he dedicated to the Mother of God, so that they might be enabled to pass their lives therein praying and holding services. He built this church, not on the mountain's summit, but much lower down. [...] And at the base of the mountain [the summit] this Emperor built a very strong fortress and established there a considerable garrison [station[354]] of troops, in order that the barbarian Saracens might not be able from that region, which, as I have said, is uninhabited, to make in-roads with complete secrecy into the lands of Palestine proper.' **(Text XXXIV)**

The passage has caused controversy, mainly because of its unclear meaning. The statement that the area was uninhabited was incorrect. The fortress and the basilica were mentioned separately although the latter was contained within the former. The strategic reasons behind the construction of the fortress (and the garrison station) were separated from the religious motivation for the erection of the latter. And the translation quoted above (and all others published so far) missed a point made clear in the Greek original:[355] the word *phylaktērion* (translated as 'garrison' by most editors) did not refer to people but to a building, a 'garrison station.'

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[353] For details of Prokopios' editions, see section 2.4.4. English translation in Prokopius 1971: 355-7, other English translations as in section 2.4.4. For a general discussion, see Eckenstein 1921: 121-2; Labib 1961: 10-11; Skrobucha 1966: 32; Paisios 1978: 78-9.
[354] Author's addition.
[355] Most researchers missed the distinction made by Prokopios; see Forsyth 1980: 50-1.

It was this last misunderstanding that prompted Philip Mayerson to strongly doubt the historical value of Prokopios' account.[356] He claimed that the garrison could not have been stationed in the surviving fortress (present-day Monastery of Saint Catherine) – a justified point given the anchoretic character of the Horeb community. Therefore, he concluded, it had not been posted at all.[357] However, excavations in 2001-2003 brought to light one more fortified structure to the east of the Monastery (section 3.2, figures 46-48). This should be what Prokopios meant by '*phylaktērion*,' the garrison's abode.

As far as Justinian's dual motivation and the area's lack of occupants were concerned, perhaps Prokopios' sources were inadequate or contradictory. It is also possible that he was not interested to describe accurately but to celebrate and glorify, aiming at 'the sensational and the dramatic.'[358] Furthermore, as mentioned before (section 2.4.4), he was fairly unaccustomed to the realities of the desert and held its ways in disdain. However, it seems that the imperial agenda was indeed twofold, aiming to protect the anchorites and pilgrims and to police the Bedouin.

Between the two objectives, the religious one seems to have been more important, since there could not have been a strategically worse position for the fortress and the *phylaktērion* than the one chosen. Situated at the foot of the mountain, they were open to attacks from adjacent mountain peaks (figures 31, 46

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[356] Mayerson 1978: 33-6; Mayerson 1982: 52.
[357] Further, better founded, doubts on Prokopios' account on Sinai were put forward by Irfan Shahîd (1995b: 979-80), but do not refer to issues touched upon here.
[358] Cameron 1985: 96.

and 48).[359] However, the fortress managed to protect the Burning Bush and the *katholikon* in front of it, aptly dedicated to the Mother of God,[360] whose virginity was paralleled to the shrub which would not be consumed by fire. A Saracen raid in *circa* 570 was successfully fended off thanks to the high walls.[361] Although the fortifications were far from frontiers, trade routes and lines of defense, their impressive volume inspired awe and performed a diplomatic role by consolidating imperial authority in a hard-to-control area.[362]

3.1.2. Eutychios

Eutychios (Saʿīd ibn Biṭrīq, 877-940, patriarch of Alexandria between 933 and 940, writing in the early tenth century) gave the longest and most detailed account for the building of the fortress and the two churches:[363]

> "When the monks of Mount Sinai heard of the receptive disposition of Emperor Justinian and that he delighted in building churches and monasteries, they came to him and complained that the Ishmaelite Arabs injured them by devouring their provisions, and destroying their places (of habitation). [...] When the Emperor asked them what they wanted, they said: 'Oh king, that you build us a monastery in which we may be protected.' [...] The Emperor consequently sent a legate with full authority and with written instructions to the prefect of Egypt that he supply him [the legate] with as

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[359] Forsyth 1968: 4-6; Forsyth 1980: 52-4.
[360] On the original dedication of the church and the problems of Prokopios' attribution, see section 3.3.1.4 and Grēgoriadēs 1875: 53-5; Forsyth 1968: 14-5 note 17; Dahari 2000: 29-34, 61.
[361] Evagrius 1865: 2803; Dahari 2000: 55; Grossmann 2002: 35-6.
[362] It is in this respect that Philip Mayerson's opinions are correct (Mayerson 1978; Mayerson 1986: 35-6, 38-9), stressing the policing rather than military character of the project. However, his questioning of the Prokopios account altogether should be viewed with caution. For a balanced discussion, see Cameron 1985: 96-8; see also Isaac 1984: 196-7.
[363] English translation in Mayerson 1978: 36-7, continued in Skrobucha 1966: 34, with corrections by the author; Latin translation in Eutychius 1863: 1071-2; German translation in Eutychios 1985: 88-90 (the corresponding volume with the Arabic text has not yet been located). On Eutychios' life, see Breydy 1983: 1-11; Eddé *et al.* 1997: 158-9. On this text, see Eckenstein 1921: 122-4; Labib 1961: 11; Mayerson 1964: 181-2, 182 note 83; Skrobucha 1966: 32-4; Dahari 2000: 30. Eutychios' text was one of the sources of 'Abu'l-Makārim's' and al-Maqrīzī's accounts of the Monastery; see section 3.1.5 and al-Makrizi 1908: 204.

much money as needed, and that he provide men and provisions from Egypt. The legate was also ordered to build a church at Clysma, and a monastery at Raya; and to build a monastery on Mount Sinai and to fortify it so that no better could be found in the entire world, and to make it so strong that the monks or the monastery would not fear or suffer from any quarter. The legate built the church of St. Athanasius at Clysma and the monastery at Raya; and then going to Mount Sinai he found the Bush located in a narrow place between two mountains, and in the same spot he found a tower built near the Bush and some running springs of water near it, and monks scattered about the wadis. It was his intention to build the monastery high up on the mountain and to leave the Bush and the tower (where they were). However, he rejected the plan because of the water, since there was no adequate supply of water on the mountain. He therefore built the monastery close to the Bush and enclosed the tower within the monastery. The monastery was situated between two mountains and in a narrow spot, so much that if anyone climbed the northern slope of the mountain and threw a stone, it would land in the middle of the monastery and injure the monks. Hence he built the monastery in this narrow spot, close by the Bush and the famous (biblical) monuments and a supply of water. On the mountain top, above the spot where Moses received the law, he built a chapel. The name of the abbot of the monastery was Doulas. The legate returned to Emperor Justinian and informed him of the churches and monasteries that he had built. He also described how he built the monastery of Mount Sinai. The emperor answered and said: 'You made a mistake and you have harmed the monks and placed them in the hands of the enemy. Why did you not build the monastery on top of the mountain?' The legate answered: 'I placed it near the Bush and close to the water supply; but if it had been built on the mountain top, the monks would lack water so much so that if they were at any time besieged, their water supply would be shut off and they would die of thirst. Moreover the Bush would be too far away from them.' The emperor said: 'You must reduce the mountain, which dominates the monastery on the north, to ground level.' The legate answered him: 'If we applied to that task all the resources of Rome, Egypt and Syria, we still could not level that mountain to the ground.' At this the emperor was enraged, and had him beheaded. Then he dispatched another legate, and with him a party consisting of domestic slaves of the Romans with their wives and children, to the number of a hundred persons, and he ordered him to take from Egypt another hundred, including wives and children. He was to build houses outside the monastery for them to live in, so that they might protect the monastery and the monks. He further bade him provide them with sustenance, and to cause a sufficient supply of grain to be procured from Egypt for them and for the monastery. When the legate reached Mount Sinai, he built the required number of dwellings outside the monastery on the east, and fortified them with a castle. He caused the above-mentioned slaves to settle in these dwellings, so that they could guard the monastery and protect it. This place is called to this day Deir el Abid, or 'Serfminster'."

The strategic concerns touched upon in the discussion of Prokopios' account were better explained in this passage by an author closely acquainted with the

topography and realities of Sinaitic life. The dilemma faced by the legate was a real one, as the surrender of Christian refugees at Hagia Koryphē to Muslim besiegers a century and a half later was due to the lack of water (sections 3.1.3 and 4.1.2). On the other hand, the corruptibility of the fortress' defenses by human and natural agents remains a weak spot to this day.

Eutychios' sources were probably local, different from the official sources Prokopios had used four centuries earlier. Yet, both authors referred to a delegation (or petition) of anchorites to the imperial court and to the subsequent building of the fortress and basilica at the foot of the mountain.[364] Whether the legate story was true or not, it illustrates the importance of both the metaphysical element and the practical considerations in the imperial decision-making process. It also explains the mechanism through which orders were implemented: An order was carried out through the dispatch of an official from the capital who raised funds, mobilised a local workforce and was allowed considerable freedom in making choices and interpreting instructions. After work was finished, a report was presented to the imperial authority and necessary amendments were made.

The last contributions by Eutychios were his brief mention of the 'chapel' at the summit, clearly a part of the same Justinianic project, and his description of the 'serfminster,' [365] which can be safely identified with the *phylaktērion* of Prokopios. The dwellings and fortress the emperor ordered to be built were demolished in the eighth century by the monks to prevent the lay population latterly converted to

[364] For an early discussion comparing the two texts, see Grēgoriadēs 1875: 40-53.
[365] Eckenstein 1921: 124.

Islam from disturbing their ascetic lives (section 4.1.2). The ruins were still visible at the time Eutychios wrote and indeed remained visible (and ignored) until 2000, when excavation brought to light a workshop / kitchen complex and a large fortified enclosure (section 3.2). Both Prokopios and Eutychios were aware of the full scale of the project and discussions about their presumed mistakes and inconsistencies were simply due to partial knowledge of the archaeological record.

3.1.3. Anastasios

Some information in Anastasios' mid-seventh-century *Narrations* (section 2.4.6) complements the picture created by Prokopios and Eutychios and relates to the way the Hagia Koryphē basilica functioned by the seventh century.[366]

In the second **(text XXVIII)**, thirty-seventh and thirty-ninth **(text XXIX)** narrations, the post of *paramonarios*, overseer, was mentioned for the summit church. He was obviously occupied with the care of the structure, carried the keys to it and was important enough within the monastic hierarchy to be deemed worthy of an apprentice (*diakonētēs*). The *paramonarios* would not spend the night on Hagia Koryphē thanks to the prohibition already discussed (section 2.5), although he was there early enough to welcome two fathers visiting the place (first narration). Probably he was stationed at a nearby cell, at Prophētēs Hēlias or further up the stepped path. Such a cell was identified by Uzi Dahari on the extremely steep southern slope of Hagia Koryphē some 250 m below the summit.[367]

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[366] Dahari 2000: 30.
[367] Dahari 2000: 37, 44-5.

In the third narration, Pentecost was mentioned as being celebrated at Hagia Koryphē. Although this could be an indication of the dedication of the summit basilica, such a conclusion would be premature without further evidence, and a dedication to Moses seems more plausible (sections 3.1.5 and 3.3.1.4):[368]

> 'Once as the *anaphora* was performed during the celebration for the holy Pentecost, and the priest having recited the *epiniktios* hymn of the magnificent glory, all the mountains responded by saying three times with terrible thunder: Holy, Holy, Holy; and the reverberating sound and the thunder continued up to half an hour.' **(Text XXXV)**

A celebration day at Hagia Koryphē was also mentioned in the thirty-sixth narration but without further clarification.

3.1.4. Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae

In the *Synaxarium of the Church of Constantinople* (section 2.2.1), dated to the tenth century and later, another mention was made to the Justinianic programme:[369]

> 'This king, blessed be his memory, built the magnificent fortress on the sacred Sinai mountain and glorified the holy churches within it having built them with honour; and he erected the admirable church of the sacred summit of the sacred mountain; and he plentifully provided monetary resources to the monasteries living in prudency and celibacy in the Sinai, and the whole of Egypt and Palestine.' **(Text XXXVI)**

A number of churches were mentioned within the fortress, but they were probably chapels (several of them were built along the aisles of the basilica and in other places within the enclosure, see section 3.2). The Hagia Koryphē basilica was clearly considered as part of the same project and its mountaintop location was carefully separated from the fortress and its church(es).

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[368] Author's translation.
[369] Author's translation. On the text, see Amantos 1953: 11 note 1; Paisios 1978: 79.

3.1.5. 'Abu'l-Makārim' and al-Maqrīzī

In a 1338 manuscript of a text composed in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century (before 1208) and attributed to a Coptic writer named 'Abu'l-Makārim,' a detailed and valuable description of the Monastery of Saint Catherine and its environs was given.[370] The Horeb description probably dated from after 1180.[371] The early date of the work, the even earlier date of its sources, which include Eutychios, and the possibility of first-hand familiarity with the place make this description a particularly valuable addition to the body of written evidence on Horeb:[372]

> '[Paragraph 4] There [on al-Ṭūr, Mount Sinai] is a church on the summit of the mountain, over the place where the prophet Moses received the Law. There is also the church of Saint George, the church of Saint Stephanos, the church of Aaron the priest, a church dedicated to Saint Basil. And there was constructed a church dedicated to the prophet Elijah. [...]
> [Paragraph 6] On this mountain God spoke to the prophet Elijah at a place different from the one where God spoke to Moses. There one finds traces of his ascension: the imprints of his hands, of his elbows and of his legs. The place of his removal is under a dome. [...]
> [Paragraph 15c] It is mentioned that there were in this valley at the time of the Byzantine Empire twelve thousand monasteries and churches filled with monks. There also was a hospital the traces of which survive to this day.
> [Paragraph 16a] The church that is on the summit of the mountain is built of black stones. The width of its enclosure is seven cubits. It comprises three iron doors and a small door on its western side, in front of which rests a small moveable stone. If the monks wish to lift it, they do it. When a visitor approaches, they make it glide in such fashion that it obstructs and obscures the position of the door. In the interior, a spring is found and another on the exterior. The Christians allege that there is a sacred flame of the same sort with the flame that revives itself in Jerusalem. They use it for illumination every evening. Its light is white and of a weak heat that does not burn. It becomes stronger when it is used to light a lamp. It is populated by monks and people that come to visit them. It is one of the monasteries that are known for their miracles.
> [Paragraph 16b] It is mentioned that the number of steps taken to ascend [to the summit] amounts to seven thousand five hundred and sixty. The ascent requires a whole day, like the descent.'

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[370] On the work and its date, see Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006: 1-6.
[371] Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006: 53.
[372] Author's translation, after the French translation in Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006: 49, 52, where the unpublished Arabic original text is not given.

The editors of 'Abu'l-Makārim's' text proposed that the description in paragraph 16a did not refer to the Hagia Koryphē basilica but to the Monastery, and suggested he misunderstood a confusing earlier source.[373] It is more probable that the description was a *mélange* of details from both buildings, since the reference to 'black stones' was accurate as far as the gray granite foundations of the summit basilica were concerned but did not apply to the fortress. The three 'iron' doors and the sliding rock appeared in several descriptions of the Monastery,[374] the two springs could refer either to the Monastery (with the two wells) or to Hagia Koryphē (with the two cisterns) and the seven cubit-wide enclosure (whichever of the many possible cubit lengths was meant) applied to neither.

'Abu'l-Makārim' mentioned the 'serfminster' or *phylaktērion* in paragraphs 3 and 5, a 'hospital' (section 3.2) and the conversion of the laymen to Islam in paragraph 5 (section 4.1.2), probably quoting Eutychios (section 3.1.2).[375] He also listed churches of Saints George, Stephanos, Basil, the prophet Elijah and the priest Aaron, obviously referring to chapels within and around the Monastery.[376]

The Cairene historian al-Maqrīzī's (1364-1442) text on Mount Sinai, although written at a later age, also contained a description of the Hagia Koryphē basilica:[377]

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[373] Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006: 19-20.
[374] Jacopo da Verona, who visited Horeb in September 1335, and the Italian notary from Carinola, Niccolò de Martoni, who made the pilgrimage to Sinai in September 1394, mentioned three iron-clad doors at the Monastery; see Jacopo 1950: 73; Martoni 1895: 572, 607, his Horeb visit in pages 605-10. Similar references appear in later accounts, for example by A. von Harff in 1496-1499; see Harff 1946: 140. The present iron-clad door on the western wall of the Monastery has been dated to the twelfth century; see section 3.2.
[375] Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006: 15-8. The 'hospital' and pilgrim hostel were thought to be separate buildings because they were mentioned separately. However, it is possible that they were the same edifice; see section 3.2.
[376] Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006: 21-4.
[377] Translated by the author after the French translation in al-Makrizi 1908: 204. It has not been

> 'To ascend to Sinai, one has to climb 6,666 steps. Half way up there is a church dedicated to the prophet Elijah. On the summit there is another church dedicated to Moses (blessed be his name) with columns of marble and doors of bronze. It is the place where God, the most High, talked to Moses and it is from there that the latter took the rock with the Tablets of the Law. There is but one monk in the service of the church. They claim that no one can spend the night there, but there is outside a shelter for the guardian, where he can spend the night. There is now nothing left of these churches.'

Al-Maqrīzī's description was accurate (only the number of steps was overstated[378]) and so were the references to a *paramonarios* and the prohibition to spend the night on the summit (section 2.5). He reported the church as being dedicated to Moses. The source al-Maqrīzī used for the description was obviously an earlier one, but he was well enough informed to specify that at the time of writing the basilica had been destroyed. He also mentioned a church at Prophētēs Hēlias, of which no trace exists. 'Abu'l-Makārim' had added that this church was crowned by a dome, an interesting architectural detail.[379]

Both 'Abu'l-Makārim' and al-Maqrīzī probably got their information from a pool of references which included Eutychios and other Coptic and Melkite (Orthodox Christian of the Chalcedonian rite) sources in Arabic.[380] However, each added interesting details that were sourced from first-hand experience, either personal or derived by others who had recently visited Horeb.

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possible to find the Arabic original. Greek translation in Grēgoriadēs 1875: 82-3. See also Jacopo 1950: 198 note 243.

[378] Unless the number denotes the sum of steps going up and down. 'Abu'l-Makārim' quoted 7560 steps; see above and Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006: 12-3. For similar calculations by Christian pilgrims, see section 4.2.2.

[379] Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006: 34.

[380] Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006: 12-3.

3.2. The fortress, basilica and other buildings at Wādī ʾl-Dayr

The following description of the sixth-century (Justinianic period and later) buildings within and around the fortress which is now the Monastery of Saint Catherine (figure 31) does not claim to be exhaustive, since many publications have undertaken this task with varying degrees of success.[381] It aims to provide a backdrop to the detailed discussion of the summit basilica in section 3.3. The Monastery as it stands today is a labyrinthine complex of dozens of buildings dating from the fourth to the twentieth century. Within the same room, walls from different periods often coexist under a later roof. The dry climate prevents materials from decomposing and dating is a subtle process of trial and error which has never been consistently undertaken throughout the enclosure and subsequently published. Some details on the dating of later features which are visible in the illustrations will be given here to aid the reader and prevent confusion.[382]

The fortress measures approximately 76 m N-S by 87 m E-W (figures 19 and 32) and its walls vary in height between 12 and 15 m.[383] Today it has two main entrances and a few secret ones. There is an entrance on the western wall and another on the northern wall. The western one has had its iron-clad cypress wood door dated to the twelfth century[384] (figure 33, see 'Abu'l-Makārim's' description in section 3.1.5) and lies to the left of the original sixth-century

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[381] An early description of the fortress dates to the early eighteenth century (or earlier) and was first printed in 1710; see *Perigraphē* 1978: 126-37. On the history of the fortress the same document is still valuable, see *Perigraphē* 1978: 111-3.
[382] The cardinal points are given according to the orientation of the basilica (the sanctuary of which is to the east), although there is some discrepancy when it comes to the fortress walls.
[383] Rabino 1935: 25.
[384] Liphschitz & Waisel 1976: 42.

gateway, which is now walled up. Above it a *machicoulis* bears a *tabula ansata* in granite with the following inscription:[385]

> 'This is the gate of the Lord through which the righteous may enter + of Justinian the emperor the friend of buildings [or 'of Christ']'[386] **(Text XXXVII)**

The northern portion of the fortress was founded on a crevice in the *wādī* bed, whilst the southern half was erected on solid granite (figure 34). All structures within and around were built of large blocks of relatively friable local red granite. A series of buildings and facilities dating from the sixth century are arranged inside the enclosure, in casemate fashion, like the mill on the northeastern corner and the painted chapel within the southern wall.[387] However, the best-known early features of the complex are the present-day mosque, originally used as the refectory, and the basilical church (*katholikon*) opposite.

The mosque is roughly square with two cross-sectioned pillars supporting a flat roof and it has been extensively plastered and remodelled in recent years, thus rendering research into its various phases very difficult (figures 32 and 35). Furthermore, access to it is possible only on a few festival days during the year, making systematic examination of the building and its contents still more difficult. According to H. L. Rabino, a Byzantine marble altar cover with sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Muslim pilgrim inscriptions in ink was originally incorporated into the *mihrab* niche.[388] The Russian pilgrim and envoy of the tsar Vasiliĭ Posniakov (travelled 1558-1561) mentioned that the building was originally a

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[385] Author's translation. Amantos 1953: 12; Paisios 1978: 80; Dahari 2000: 58.
[386] 'Friend of Christ' sounds better than 'friend of buildings,' but both readings have been suggested by scholars.
[387] Forsyth *et al.* 1973: plate IX; Dahari 2000: 58-8. On early structures, see Forsyth 1968: 15.

chapel dedicated to Saint Basil of Caesarea (Basil the Great, 330-379).[389] George H. Forsyth identified it with the fortress' original guest house.[390] Both these views do not agree with similar examples of Byzantine monastic architecture, in which buildings axially situated immediately to the west of *katholikon* churches are used as refectories.[391] Probably in the early twelfth century a minaret was added to the northeastern corner of the mosque (figure 80). The minaret retains its original roof of date palm, black poplar and cypress timber.[392]

The church (*katholikon*) survives in an astonishing state of preservation and contains a unique collection of fittings and icons (figures 36-44). Its original dedication was to the Virgin Mary (*Theotokos*), according to Prokopios (section 3.1.1), and now it is to the Transfiguration, after the scene depicted in mosaic on the semidome of the sanctuary apse (figure 42).[393] The *katholikon* was orientated off-axis within the fortress and its floor was sunken four metres below the level of the western entrance, solutions probably dictated by the geomorphology of the site and the need to place the Burning Bush to the east of the sanctuary arch (figure 32).[394] A three-aisled nucleus terminates with a semicircular apse which is inscribed within a rectangle and surrounded by two (slightly later) chapels with three apses each (figure 38.2).[395] Three chapels flank each of the aisles,[396] but it has been argued that

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[388] Rabino 1938: 39-40, 42, 107.
[389] Meistermann 1909: 133. On V. Posniakov, see Khitrowo 1889: 287-8; Eckenstein 1921: 176.
[390] Forsyth 1968: 7-8; Forsyth 1980: 55-6; Kamil 1991: 51; Dahari 2000: 59.
[391] Amantos 1953: 17.
[392] Liphschitz & Weisel 1976: 42-3.
[393] Eckenstein 1921: 129.
[394] Forsyth 1968: 6-7, 6-7 note 5; Forsyth 1980: 56.
[395] On the date of the side chapels, see Dahari 2000: 60.
[396] Forsyth 1968: 11. The chapels opening to the side of the aisles remind chapels at the basilica of Moses on Mount Nebo; see section 3.2 and Forsyth 1968: 11 note 13.

the partition walls between them are later and the original spaces were long corridors of unknown function (figure 38.2).[397] A slightly later narthex stands to the west with its entrance opposite the former refectory (present-day mosque).

The chapel of the Burning Bush is a later addition and the main attraction for pilgrims visiting the fortress was originally growing within an open air enclosure, a small courtyard (figure 38.1-2).[398] The semidome of the small apse in the chapel is decorated with a cross in mosaic probably dating from the eleventh century,[399] whilst the rest of the interior was clad in glazed tiles in 1680.[400] The chapel was accessible via the northern aisle of the basilica through the chapel to the left of the basilica apse. The return route passed through the corresponding chapel to the right and along the southern aisle.[401] Interestingly, the focus of interest of the entire complex, the Burning Bush, originally lay outside the main structure of the *katholikon* rather than being placed at its centre, a practice connected by G. H. Forsyth to the Constantinian tradition of Palestinian Holy Land pilgrimage buildings.[402]

The nave is separated from the aisles by colonnades supporting arches, the columns built of granite sections and plastered. Their granite capitals were carved with a variety of devices (figure 37).[403] The building is still covered by a roof retaining a large part of its original sixth-century cypress timber. It was thoroughly

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[397] Dahari 2000: 60.
[398] Forsyth 1968: 5-6; Forsyth 1980: 52; Dahari 2000: 60.
[399] Sōtēriou & Sōtēriou 1958: 5; Weitzmann 1980: 87.
[400] Restored and possibly added to in 1770; see Rabino 1935: 32, 33, 83, 84.
[401] Forsyth 1980: 52, 63-4. Peter Grossmann doubted this route; see Dahari 2000: 60.
[402] Forsyth 1968: 7-18. In addition to G. H. Forsyth's arguments, we could add that the 'Burning Bush' was (and remains) a living organism much in need of fresh air and light; the open-air court

restored and boards were added between the beams to create a ceiling in 1732.[404] The outer sheathing of lead sheets survived until the late nineteenth or the early twentieth century.[405] On the beautifully carved ceiling beams,[406] pinewood boards facing east (the first one) and west (the two others) bear carved inscriptions:[407]

> '+ Lord God who appeared in this place, save and have mercy on your servant Stephanos Martyriou, deacon and architect from Aila, and rest in peace the souls of his children Georgios and Nonna.' **(Text XXXVIII)**

> '+ To the memory and for the repose of our departed queen Theodora +' **(Text XXXIX)**

> '+ For the salvation of our most pious king Justinian +' **(Text XL)**

Since the church originally had no ceiling, the beams were exposed and the inscriptions were visible from below.[408] In this way, people in the nave could easily read the imperial names whereas those of the architect and his children would be seen by officiating priests. The builder of the edifice was Stephanos from the city of Aila in the Gulf of Aqaba. Thus Eutychios' claim that local forces were used for the project (section 3.1.2) is verified.[409] The two other inscriptions are the best testimony for the dating of the building, since Theodora died in 548 and Justinian in 565. Therefore, the roof was constructed sometime after the empress' death and before Prokopios' *On Buildings* was published *circa* 560.[410]

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was necessary for its survival and today it grows outside the chapel.

[403] Abel 1907: 109-11, plates III-IV.

[404] On the date of the roof timber, see Liphschitz & Waisel 1976: 41-2. On the ceiling, see Amantos 1953: 15.

[405] Forsyth 1968: 8-9, 8-9 note 7; Forsyth 1980: 57.

[406] Weitzmann 1980: 82.

[407] Author's translation. Rabino 1935: 27, 79-80. The inscriptions were mentioned by Richard Pococke, who visited Sinai in 1739, see Pococke 1814 (originally published in 1743): 290. See also Amantos 1953: 13; Paisios 1978: 81.

[408] Sōtēriou & Sōtēriou 1958: 6-7; Weitzmann 1980: 82.

[409] Gutwein 1981: 23.

[410] Forsyth 1980: 57. For a discussion of the Stephanos inscription date based on the tombstone of

The wooden doors separating the narthex from the nave are of the sixth century (figures 37 and 39), whilst the exterior narthex doors are of Fāṭimid date (eleventh or twelfth century).[411] In the Early Christian period, pilgrims and lay visitors would enter the main church through the side doorways into the aisles rather than through the main entrance into the nave (figure 37), a way in reserved for clerics and important visitors.[412]

The original floor was destroyed in 1401 during an attack by the Mamlūk army (section 4.2.1) and the present one in the nave dates from 1583-1592 (restored in 1714-5, figure 40),[413] whereas the aisles and narthex were paved anew in 1766.[414] However, the apse retains its original marble cladding (figure 41). The semidome above was decorated with a mosaic of the Transfiguration surrounded by bands of protomes of the apostles and prophets within medallions (figures 41 and 42).[415] A long mosaic inscription underneath is the only one in the fortress which is free of errors. It reads:[416]

> '+ In the name of the father and the son and the holy ghost the whole of this work was executed for the salvation of those who contributed towards it in

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a certain '<daughter> of Stephanos, Nonna the Ailesian' from Beersheba (547 or 562), see Ševčenko 1966: 256-7; Forsyth 1968: 9. On the erection date of the fortress and *katholikon*, up to then incorrectly placed to 527 because of a much later inscription over the later western entrance, see Grēgoriadēs 1875: 43-53.

[411] Abel 1907: 109, plate II2; Rabino 1935: 45, 45 notes 1-2, plates IX-X; Skrobucha 1966: 89-90. On the sixth-century date of the doors, see Forsyth 1968: 10; Liphschitz & Weisel 1976: 42; Forsyth 1980: 58; Weitzmann 1980: 81-2.

[412] Forsyth 1968: 10; Forsyth 1980: 59.

[413] The work of a Damascene artisan; see Eckenstein 1921: 130; Rabino 1935: 31, 82; Daumas 1951: 390 note ***; Sōtēriou & Sōtēriou 1958: 3-4; Skrobucha 1966: 86-7.

[414] By the Sinai *skeuophylax* (sacristan) Prokopios, a famous marble carver formerly in the Ottoman sultan's court; see Beamont 1861: 61; Grēgoriadēs 1875: 17 note 1; Rabino 1935: 27, 80; *Perigraphē* 1978: 127-8.

[415] First studied in any detail by Léon E. S. J. de Laborde (1830: 67-8, plate 20) and restored in 1847; see Sōtēriou & Sōtēriou 1958: 4-6; Weitzmann 1982b: 5-18.

[416] Author's translation. On the authenticity of the inscription, see Ševčenko 1966: 258-61. See also Amantos 1953: 12.

> the time of Longinos, most holy priest and superior + + By the effort of Theodōros, priest and second in command, indiction fourteen.' **(Text XLI)**

The key of the arch is flanked by two globe-bearing angels flying towards the Lamb of the Eucharist, with protomes of John the Baptist and the Virgin Mary on either side.[417] The window on top is surrounded by two panels depicting Moses removing his sandals before the Burning Bush and Moses receiving the Law (figure 43).[418]

The sophisticated iconographic programme of the apse subtly alluded to all the elements of the Sinaitic narrative bringing together Old and New Testament. Elijah and Moses, the prophets associated with Horeb and commemorated at Hagia Koryphē and Prophētēs Hēlias, are flanking Christ, hovering between His human and divine natures (a reference to the Christological controversy raging in the sixth-century Near East).[419] At His feet three New Testament figures, the apostles Peter, John and James, squirm and marvel at the miracle. Moses' Sinaitic moments are illustrated over the Transfiguration and below them the faces of the Baptist and the Virgin Mary create a Deesis with the medallion of the Eucharistic Lamb at the keystone of the arch.[420]

A marble altar (covered with a 1675 mother-of-pearl and ivory inlaid wooden canopy,[421] figure 41), a marble altar screen (partly reused in various parts

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[417] Visitors until the early twentieth century followed the traditional identification of these heads with Justinian and Theodora, although doubts were expressed because of differences with their portraits on the San Vitale mosaics in Ravenna. The Virgin Mary protome was first recognised by F. M. Abel (1907: 107-8), who identified the male protome with Christ.
[418] Abel 1907: 105-9, plate I.
[419] Weitzmann 1980: 84. For an excellent introduction to the theological and political implications of the Christological controversy in the time of Justinian, see Meyendorff 1968.
[420] Forsyth 1968: 13, 14 note 17; Weitzmann 1980: 85. This was the first representation of the Deesis in Byzantine art.
[421] The work of Stamatios from Athens; see Rabino 1935: 30, 82; Weitzmann 1980: 83. On the wood, mother-of-pearl, tortoiseshell and ivory furniture, see *Perigraphē* 1978: 128.

of the church)[422] and a few icons which have been stylistically dated to the period (figure 44) survive from the original furnishings of the church.[423] They were imported into South Sinai and, as far as the monumental encaustic icons at least are concerned, they originated in Constantinople and are representative of its classicising style.[424] Although the mosaic decoration is obscured today by the gilt wood altar screen erected in 1612 (section 5.1, figure 95), it would originally have been visible from the nave's entrance.[425] The semidome would look from a distance like an enormous eye with the mandorla around the figure of Christ as its pupil.[426] The interior of the basilica was both magnificent in scale and rich in detail, in keeping with developments in Constantinopolitan church decoration.

Outside the fortress walls, further structures date from the same period (mid- to late sixth century). Their ruins were mentioned by Eutychios in the early tenth century (section 3.1.2) and 'Abu'l-Makārim' in the late twelfth or the early thirteenth century (section 3.1.5) and remained visible but ignored until an article by Andrei Popescu-Belis was published in 2000, including a simple ground-plan.[427] In the spring of that year, archaeological research by the Hellenic Archaeological Mission at South Sinai had already started to the east of the Monastery of Saint Catherine and at a distance of approximately 30 m from its wall. It brought to light two enclosures, one between 50 and 60 m square and the

[422] Forsyth 1968: 12; Forsyth 1980: 60; Weitzmann 1980: 83.
[423] The icon of Christ Pantocrator illustrated was originally dated to the thirteenth century; see Sōtēriou & Sōtēriou 1956: 19, plate 174; Sōtēriou & Sōtēriou 1958: 161-2.
[424] Weitzmann 1966: 6-10.
[425] Forsyth 1968: 8; Forsyth 1980: 57.
[426] Forsyth 1980: 62.
[427] Popescu-Belis 2000: 385-6.

other smaller and of irregular shape (figures 45-47).[428] The former has been only partially excavated (its southeastern portion had come to light by 2007) but the latter has been investigated more or less completely and is thought to be a cluster of workshops and kitchens, servicing both the adjacent enclosure and the fortress.

The nature of the larger structure is as yet unclear, but there is reason to believe it is the *phylaktērion* mentioned by Prokopios (section 3.1.1) or 'serfminster' described by Eutychios (section 3.1.2). It consists of a series of identical rooms arranged along a strongly-built outer wall and opening into corridors (probably built up in later times as well). A large space (possibly a tower) appears to be projecting from the middle of the eastern wall, which dominates a slope overlooking the eastern approach to Wādī 'l-Dayr. Along the eastern portion of the southern wall is an impressive room with buttresses supporting its long walls (figure 46).[429] The character of the building is defensive and the architecture of Early Christian frontier fortresses, *limes*, provides similar examples.[430]

An alternative interpretation could be proposed for this enclosure. A 'hospital,' a hostel for pilgrims (infirm or not) flocking to South Sinai, existed in the early seventh century and was mentioned by Anastasios (section 2.4.6) and 'Abu'l-Makārim' (section 3.1.5). A miracle witnessed by John 'Klimax' in the early seventh century (on the day he was appointed abbot) happened during a meal served

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[428] A brief excavation of the rubbish heaps outside (and to the east?) of the Monastery in spring 1906 (?) under C. T. Currelly proved fruitless; see Petrie 1906: 237.

[429] No report of this excavation, even preliminary, has been published so far. Information and suggested interpretations come from first-hand experience and personal communications with the author's fellow excavators Nikolaos Fyssas and Dionysios Mourelatos.

[430] Although the portion already revealed is small, the building seems to be similar to *limes* fortresses or even small *quadriburgia*, structures familiar from settlements and military outposts of

to six hundred people in a presumably very large room,[431] and the southeastern buttressed room could very well have been the one.

A similar structure with a large buttressed room has been excavated at Mount Nebo in Jordan and has been interpreted as a 'hospital.' This mountaintop pilgrimage facility, associated with Moses as well, was also of Justinianic date and could be paralleled with the Horeb one. In any case, the *phylaktērion* building could accommodate multiple functions within its walls. Similar sharing of a fortified building's area for military purposes and for hospitality appears in the *castrum* and *xenodochium* 'of Saint George' 30 km outside Elusa in the Negev desert, built during the later sixth century.[432]

Whatever their function, the two previously unknown buildings change our understanding of Justinian's building programme. Scholars so far have assumed that the Sinai project was relatively small in scope, a basilica protected by a fortress. The investment was modest when compared with costly undertakings in Palestine and Egypt. However, the fortress and basilica ought to be included now within a larger scheme, encompassing another fortified structure and organised workshops.

Furthermore, the ground-plan of the recently excavated sixth-century monastery at Wādī al-Ṭūr near the coastal town of Raithō reflects the defensive arrangement of the Horeb structures, especially the *phylaktērion* (figure 48).[433] Although no textual confirmation exists, this coastal complex may perhaps be attributed to a wider project aimed at organising and channeling the pilgrim traffic

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Palaestina Tertia; see Gutwein 1981: 321-38.
[431] Dahari 2000: 56.
[432] Mayerson 1963: 170-1; Mayerson 1964: 186; Mayerson 1994: 241.

from the Red Sea port to Horeb and protecting the area from threats. The route connecting the sea with the mountain sites has been well documented and surveyed.[434] The ultimate destination of this traffic was another church, built with even greater effort and expense 700 m above Wādī 'l-Dayr.

3.3. The basilica on Hagia Koryphē and associated finds

By the time the erection of a basilica similar to the one inside the Burning Bush fortress started at Hagia Koryphē, a series of small-scale building projects had already been completed around a fourth-century chapel (section 2.3). To allow for the monumental three-aisled structure to be founded, retaining walls supporting terraces were built, encasing vestiges of previous architecture and creating a platform of sufficient length and width. The foundation of the lowest (western-most) of these retaining walls was 7 m below the level of the natural bedrock to the east (as it emerges today inside the sanctuary of the 1934 chapel of Hagia Triada, located without doubt where the sixth-century altar would have stood). Bridging this chasm required imaginative planning of transitional levels between the two extremes and a large volume of filling material.

The effort to transport this filling material must have rivaled the manpower necessary to raise the blocks of friable red granite from hundreds of metres below. The transportation of lighter items must have been effected by means of small beasts of burden, like the donkeys which still ascend the summit. However, granite

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[433] Kawatoko 1995: 51-59; Dahari 2000: 57.
[434] Kawatoko 1998: 75-91, plates 31-52; Dahari 2000: 14-5.

boulders could only have been hoisted up the vertical eastern drop of Hagia Koryphē with cranes. No evidence of such structures came to light since they would have been made of perishable wood. Some foundations were built of local gray granite, which is harder and could readily be quarried at the summit (figure 49).

Building materials, apart from granite and earth, included wood, a rarity in the Sinai Peninsula. The roof was made of long beams and rafters, similar to the ones in the fortress basilica. There is no evidence of stone or brick vaulting. The need to lift trunks long enough to bridge the nave's span makes the crane theory even more plausible. Materials also included lead for roof covering (only a few traces were unearthed since it was reused), marble and sandstone cut in geometric shapes for paving (*opus sectile*, figure 50), stone and glass *tesserae* for mosaic work and lime for wall plastering (section 2.3, figure 51). The marble was of the 'Proconnesian' variety,[435] white veined with gray and quarried at the island of Proconnesos (present-day Marmara) near Constantinople, a popular material in Early Christian and Byzantine times. The use of heavy, bulky and expensive materials transported from as far as Asia Minor testifies to the scale and cost of the undertaking.

The structures erected with these materials included a three-aisled basilica, resembling the *katholikon* but smaller, without side chapels and with elongated proportions (figure 52), a narthex, added soon after the building of the main church, a six-step stone-built staircase rising from the southern door of the narthex to the rocky outcrop where the mosque stands now (figure 53), a vaulted cistern

[435] Panayotidi & Kalopissi-Verti 2007: no pagination.

below the southern aisle and another underground cistern with a built wellhead at the foot of the summit, a few hundred metres to the west (figure 54).[436]

The exterior dimensions of the church and narthex complex were approximately 27.5 m E-W by 11.75 m N-S, whereas the southern cistern measured approximately 4.25 m E-W by 5 m N-S. The northern and southern walls of the basilica (T1 and T3, figures 8, 22 and 23) measured around 0.75 m in width and were founded on the gray granite natural bedrock to the east and on the earth fill to the west. Segments of the foundations of the two rows of stone pillars which separated the nave from the aisles and supported the roof provided the footing for the walls of the 1934 chapel of Hagia Triada. These foundations have come to light to the northwest of the modern chapel (northern stylobate, visible in figure 8 between I and J, to the east of wall T4) and to its southwest, too (southern stylobate, visible in figure 8 between J and K, to the east of wall T4, figure 49). There is no evidence to support the use of columns, either monolithic or built, in the Hagia Koryphē basilica, this being one of its main differences from the fortress church, where colonnades were used.

The narthex seems to have been added shortly after the main church was completed. There is a masonry seam between the southern aisle portion and the narthex portion of wall T3 (figure 53) but the building method was identical and evidence points to a single plan for the entire summit. It may be assumed that the work was not finished in one season and the narthex was added in the next term.

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[436] The description of the Hagia Koryphē buildings is based on personal experience and the preliminary excavation reports and congress presentations in Panagiōtidē *et al.* 1998; Panagiōtidē *et al.* 1999a; Panagiōtidē *et al.* 1999b; Panagiōtidē *et al.* 2000; Panagiōtidē *et al.* 2002; Kalopissi-

This could also be the case of the narthex added to the *katholikon*. The southern wall of the narthex survives to a height of 2.3 m and an entrance is visible up to the lintel (figure 53). It corresponded to a well-built staircase ascending from west to east on the narthex exterior. Another interior staircase, stone built and wider, ran N-S, leading up to this southern narthex entrance, probably from a lower northern entrance which disappeared after the collapse (figure 55). In this way, the steep difference in altitude between the western and eastern ends of the complex was cleverly bridged.

It is not clear how the main church was accessible from the narthex, since its floor would have been considerably higher. It is probable that the main entrance was at the southwestern corner of the southern aisle, on wall T3, and that the exterior staircase along the southern wall of the narthex led up to it. An entrance on northern wall T1 would have been unlikely, although there is a high point to the northeast (near cave B) from where the higher floor level of the church could have been reached. Such an entry point would be unworkable in the case of a pilgrimage church: It would be too close to the sanctuary and one of the main visitation spots (cave B) and the desired impression would have been lost.

The southern cistern was the only vaulted space unearthed at Hagia Koryphē and the present flat roof is post-World War II. The curvature of the original vault is visible at the northern wall of the structure, below the southern wall T3 of the basilica. The interior was plastered on a foundation consisting of rubble walls and the natural bedrock floor. On this plasterwork several pilgrims' inscriptions, some

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Verti 2006; Panayotidi & Kalopissi-Verti 2007. See also *Egeria* 2008: 79-80.

perhaps dating from the first millennium, were unearthed.[437] The cistern, originally accessible from its roof, must have served as the southern terrace of the basilica and would have been empty of water but not yet filled with debris when these inscriptions were carved. Therefore their dating would give a *terminus ante quem* for the collapse of the basilica and subsequent disuse of the cistern. Along with the underground cistern at the foot of the summit which still collects rainwater streaming down its western slope (figure 54), it would have met the needs of visitors to Hagia Koryphē and strengthened the defensive ability of the place.

Almost opposite and above the southern cistern, the opening of cave A (figures 8, 13, 14, 66, 67) was probably exposed on the face of the rock which today supports the mosque (the cave's opening is now buried behind a modern terrace which blocks its view, figure 13). The cave had been identified since the time of Egeria with the place where Moses spent forty days and nights (section 2.4.1) and the variety and early date of the inscriptions carved on its face testify to its importance (on Greek and Armenian inscriptions, see section 4.1.1). The spot was outside the main basilica building and probably had no roof. The subsidiary situation of this important visitation spot can be compared with the exposed, almost marginal, position of the Burning Bush to the east of the *katholikon* and has been connected to the Constantinian Holy Land tradition (section 3.2). However, the other cave of the summit (cave A), also associated with Moses (sections 1.5.3 and 2.3), was included within the building and could be visited at the far end of the northern aisle.

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[437] These inscriptions were in the process of being studied by a member of the excavation team at the time of writing (summer 2009).

After having suffered the arduous climb, the pilgrim was rewarded by much to marvel at. Although there is no way to reconstruct the interior decoration scheme of the building, *crustae* of white marble and sandstone must have adorned the floor (figure 50), creating a geometric *opus sectile*, while parts of the walls must have been covered with mosaics. The quantity of *tesserae* that was collected is small and although the majority may have been lost or reused within the confines of the Monastery in later times, it is unlikely that the entire surface of the walls was coated with them.[438] The example of the *katholikon*, selectively decorated at the apse, is a good parallel. There is no textual evidence on the subject matter of the mosaic.

Architectural decoration was similar to that of the *katholikon*, with twisted shaft and plain colonettes and carved pilaster capitals appearing among the *spolia* scattered around the site (figures 56 and 63). The whole of the building must have been covered with a fine layer of plaster. Architectural members with lime plaster coating came to light during the excavation (figure 51). It seems plausible that such treatment of the exterior was used in the *katholikon*, too, but it did not survive for long, as the plaster was too fragile.

Finally, the excavation brought back to light a keystone of red granite which bears an inscription (figure 57), first recorded by Ihor Ševčenko in 1966 and since considered missing. It reads:[439]

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[438] Father Daniel, sacristan of the Monastery of Saint Catherine at the time of the excavation, noted that the sandwich glass and gold *tesserae* found at Hagia Koryphē were marginally smaller and finer in thickness than the ones falling off the *katholikon* apse mosaic of the Transfiguration (section 3.2). Whether this could be explained as the result of two different workshops being employed at the two projects or as a difference in their date of execution cannot be decided without further research.

[439] Author's translation.

'God having been seen in this / place / remember Hēsychios.' (**Text XLII**)

Hēsychios' connection to the church is unclear. The placement of the inscription on a keystone, high on the building, suggests he could be contemporary with its erection. Alternatively, the keystone could have been carved after the collapse of the basilica.

Small finds from the Justinianic and pre-Islamic periods at Hagia Koryphē included several amphorae sherds that belonged predominantly to the Late Roman Amphora I type (early sixth to late seventh century), produced in Cilicia, Antioch and Cyprus and mainly used for the transportation of liquids.[440] Their contents must have been oil and wine, products necessary for the running of the church (illumination with lamps and preparation of the Eucharist) and probably offered by pilgrims and visitors as well as produced in agricultural plots on Horeb.[441] The Late Roman Amphora II type (fifth to seventh century), of Aegean origin, was less frequently encountered. Finally, fragments of window panes made with the 'bull's eye' or 'crown' technique testified to the screening material of the basilica's windows.[442] An unusual Early Christian strainer jug is the only ceramic find reported as originating from Hagia Koryphē in Rivka Calderon's article on pottery from South Sinai monastic sites retrieved during the 1970s surveys.[443]

The date of the building had already been established between 560 (when Prokopios' *On Buildings* which ignores it was published) and 565 (when Justinian

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[440] For such amphorae discovered in excavations and surface surveys around monastic sites in South Sinai, see Calderon 2000: 186.
[441] The output of a late sixth-early seventh-century Central Sinai pottery workshop, situated along one of the pilgrim routes to Horeb, may have catered for such devotional gifts; see Ballet 2001: 45-6.
[442] Panayotidi & Kalopissi-Verti 2007: no pagination, based on research by Dr Charikleia Diamanti and Ms Maria Skordara. For similar examples from South Sinai, see Gorin-Rosen 2000: 238-42.
[443] Calderon 2000: 191, 224, figure 5:66, figure 23:26.

died) and finds support this date.[444] It is possible that the interior decoration, especially the mosaics, were finished later in the century, as has been proposed for the mosaics at the *katholikon*.[445] However, the inspiration for and scale of the Hagia Koryphē project can only be attributed to the great era of imperial building that was the rule of Justinian.

3.3.1. Previous research on the Hagia Koryphē basilica

The first reference to ruins of an ancient structure was given by a Zurich-born Dominican from Ulm, Felix Fabri (*circa* 1441-1502), who visited Sinai in 22-27 September 1483:[446]

> 'As we roamed round about the top of the mountain, viewing every part thereof, we saw great ruins of ancient walls all round it. It is believed that there was a monastery there, which, however, is all destroyed save the church, beside which two of the brethren of the Convent of St. Catharine continually dwell.' **(Text XLIII)**

A few years later (17 October 1507) prior Gregor (or Georg) of Gaming (German, at Sinai 17-20 October 1507) also noticed the ruins of this ancient monastery, as did a few other writers in following centuries.[447] However, it was only in 1897 that another Dominican friar, Marie-Joseph Lagrange (French, formerly Albert Marie-Henri Lagrange, 1855-1938), tried to make sense of these ruins and to reconstruct their original shape. Following his research, the missionary Barnabé

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[444] Panayotidi & Kalopissi-Verti 2007: no pagination.
[445] Dahari 2000: 60.
[446] English translation in Fabri 1897: 559-60; Prescott 1957: 86-7. On F. Fabri, see Röhricht & Meisner 1880: 280; Davies 1911: v-vi; Eckenstein 1921: 168; Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 242.
[447] Georgius 1721: 498. B. de Monconys noted the ruins 'of a beautiful church' in 1647 (section 4.1.3) and so did C. Sicard on 16 September 1722 (see Prefetto 1810: 242-3; Prefetto 1812: 283). At about the same time, J. A. Van Egmont suggested that the granite blocks were not from a ruined building but from a half-finished one; see Van Egmont & Heyman 1759: 169.

Meistermann published a derivative ground-plan in 1909 (section 3.3.1.2). It took another eighty years for the next study to be produced.[448]

The reasons for this unwillingness to deal with the site lie beyond its mere inaccessibility. Scholars in the nineteenth century addressed questions of Biblical geography and epigraphy (section 5.1), while in the twentieth century they were preoccupied with the Monastery and its treasures (chapter 5.4).[449] The only reference to the Hagia Koryphē ruins in the large volume of literature produced by the Michigan, Princeton and Alexandria expedition coordinated by Professor Kurt Weizmann (1904-1993) appears in a footnote.[450] It was research conducted by Israeli archaeologists during the occupation of Sinai (1967-1982) that brought Hagia Koryphē back into focus (section 3.3.1.4). The main references to the summit basilica before the Hellenic Archaeological Mission at South Sinai excavation (1998-1999) will be briefly discussed in the following sections.

3.3.1.1. Nineteenth-century visitors

The first nineteenth-century scholar to note the extensive Hagia Koryphē ruins was the German Ulrich Jasper Seetzen (1767-1811) who visited the site in April 1807 and ascended the summit on the 13th or the 16th. He described pieces of white marble plaques and carved granite architectural members. He also recorded the monks' tradition that their Monastery was originally built on the summit,

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[448] The antiquity and scale of the Hagia Koryphē ruins were not unknown to twentieth-century scholars, but they did not study them in any detail before the 1980s; see Jacopo 1950: 198 note 243; Daumas 1951: 378; Amantos 1953: 17 (estimating the building's dimensions at 21.20 x 11.60 m, the width being remarkably accurate).

[449] Lottin de Laval carefully recorded eighteen inscriptions on Hagia Koryphē but ignored the ruins; see Lottin de Laval 1855-9b: plate 63.

evidently based on Eutychios (section 3.1.2).[451] J. L. Burckhardt, who visited the site in 1816, also noticed the ruins and remarked on their size and extent.[452]

William Turner wrote in the 1820 account of his travels:[453]

> 'Over this hollow is built a small Greek chapel, with granite brought up from Horeb, (for there is none on the top of Sinai,) without any cement; but this chapel is falling to ruins; it is about thirty feet long, and twelve broad. Near it stands a little Turkish mosque, built with the same materials, and neatly white-washed inside, about sixteen feet long, and eleven broad.'

This description applied until the 1934 rebuilding of the chapel on a grander scale. Turner was the first writer to hint at the effort necessary for gathering the building materials. In this, he was followed by E. Hull (20 November 1883):[454]

> 'That it was a work of much beauty, and involving great labour and expense, is testified by the fragments of the ancient building in the form of the pedestal of a granite pillar, portions of a cornice, and other architectural fragments in white marble, or in red sandstone, which are strewn about; all of which must have been brought from long distances, and carried to the summit of the mountain only by great labour.'

Other travellers who mentioned early ruins include Lieutenant James Raymond Wellsted (British, 1805-1842, visiting Horeb after 11 January 1833 and again after 23 September 1836),[455] Gotthilf Heinrich von Schubert (German, 1780-1860, at Horeb 28 February - 7 March 1837, ascended Hagia Koryphē on the 2nd, figure 135),[456] Karl Richard Lepsius (German, 1810-1884, at Horeb 23-27 March 1845, at Hagia Koryphē on the 24th)[457] and the Jesuit Father Jullien on 18

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[450] Forsyth 1968: 14 note 17.
[451] Seetzen 1855: 83-4; also quoted in Ritter 1866: 210.
[452] Burckhardt 1822: 566.
[453] Turner 1820: 436-7.
[454] Hull 1885: 53.
[455] Wellsted 1838: 105-6.
[456] Schubert 1839: plates 6-8; Schubert *et al.* 1856: plates 10-11.
[457] Quoted in Ritter 1866: 210.

November 1889.[458] The French visitor G. de Lombay, at the summit in March 1887, was the first among western writers to mention Justinian, the real imperial donor of the church, probably repeating the Monastery tradition preserved in Eutychios.[459]

The members of the 1868-1869 *Ordnance Survey of the Peninsula of Sinai* (section 5.2.4) were the first to record the buildings on Hagia Koryphē in ground-plan (figure 58). They drew the main chapel and the small room to the north (the former 'Latin' chapel, see section 4.2), the mosque and also ruins of the southern wall of the basilica, the cistern to its south and the foundations of the rows of pillars. No attempt was made to reconstruct the plan of the early building. The *Ordnance Survey* team recorded that the chapel had been rebuilt in 1864.[460]

3.3.1.2. M.-J. Lagrange (1897) and B. Meistermann (1909)

In February 1897, Father Marie-Joseph Lagrange of the Dominican convent of Saint Étienne in Jerusalem visited Sinai for a second time (the first time was in 1893) and ascended Hagia Koryphē on the 26th.[461] He published an account of this visit in the *Revue Biblique Internationale*,[462] with a ground-plan of the *katholikon* (prepared by R. P. Séjourné during the 1893 visit), another ground-plan of the ruins on the summit (figure 59) and some drawings of architectural fragments by the count de Piellat.

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[458] Jullien 1893: 127.
[459] Lombay 1892: 76. The Justinianic attribution had nevertheless been rejected some years before by the opinionated Ritter; see Ritter 1866: 210.
[460] Maughan 1873: 112-3. The chapel and mosque were restored and rebuilt at various stages in the summit's history, although, as far as textual evidence demonstrates, their position and dimensions changed little since the first millennium (section 4.3.2).
[461] For a brief reference to Lagrange's mission, see Labib 1961: 140.
[462] For Hagia Koryphē, see Lagrange 1897: 117-21.

Although Lagrange's mention of a view over the Gulfs of Suez and Aqaba from the summit was inaccurate,[463] the rest of his text and the ground-plan were meticulously compiled. It seems that the basilica ruins were not easily visible, since it took a determined monk from the Monastery of Saint Catherine to draw the attention of the learned father to their presence. Lagrange noticed the externally multi-faceted apse of the later chapel, the water tank to the south, some capitals, column bases and pieces of plaster with embedded *tesserae*. He also drew a few remaining portions of the southern and western walls of the compound. He did not explicitly recognise the church to be of basilical plan, but he assumed it to have had colonnades and mosaic decoration. As to the date of the edifice, he suggested it had been built before Egeria's visit (383, section 2.4.1) and destroyed before 'Antoninus' (the Piacenza pilgrim, Lagrange's date: '*vers 570*,' see section 2.4.5). Although he mentioned Eutychios on page 126, he obviously had not studied the text himself and was unaware of the patriarch's narration of the church's foundation (section 3.1.2).[464]

A few years later another missionary, Father Barnabé Meistermann, in his concise but well-researched *Guide from the Nile to Jordan through the Sinai and Petra on the traces of Israel* included a ground-plan of the summit basilica closely resembling the one in Lagrange's account (figure 60). He briefly commented that the three-aisled building was the one visited by Egeria (dated 385-388 in his text) but it had been demolished 'by barbarian hordes' by the time 'Antoninus' arrived

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[463] Lagrange 1897: 117. Ironically, he criticised Egeria's claim to have seen the Mediterranean from Hagia Koryphē; see Lagrange 1897: 125.

[464] Lagrange studied textual sources selectively quoted by G. M. Ebers, whose choice and method

and had been replaced by a smaller one, erected by the builders of the *katholikon*.[465] It is clear that Meistermann was heavily indebted in his account to Lagrange's article and added nothing new to it.

3.3.1.3. Peter Grossmann (published 1989)

In a brief passage included in a 1989 article, the German architect Peter Grossmann, excavator of the Pharan oasis settlement and church complexes, dealt with what was visible of the basilica by the 1980s (figure 61).[466] He correctly identified its external dimensions, the presence of the narthex and of an entrance to its south and the remaining southern half of the polygonal apse. However, he reconstructed the staircase inside the narthex as being bipartite, climbing towards a central entrance to the nave. The excavation proved this staircase to run along the western face of wall T4 from north to south, ending at the southern entrance of the narthex. Grossmann proposed an erection date around 560.

3.3.1.4. Uzi Dahari (published 2000)

Field research performed during the 1970s by an Israeli archaeological team concluded in a long and interesting discussion of the Hagia Koryphē remains by Uzi Dahari in his book *Monastic Settlements in South Sinai in the Byzantine Period*, published in 2000. Dahari's analysis of the visible ruins on the summit resulted in a reconstruction of remarkable accuracy (figures 62 and 63). He also proposed that a marble altar screen discovered within the Monastery of Saint

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he strongly criticised; see Lagrange 1897: 129 note 1.
[465] Meistermann 1909: 150-1, figures 32-33.
[466] Grossmann 1989: 1906-7.

Catherine originated from the Hagia Koryphē basilica.[467] The item's present whereabouts are unknown and it could originally have been installed in any of the side chapels of the *katholikon* or elsewhere within the fortress. However, the idea is intriguing and merits further discussion.

Although the results of the 1998-1999 excavation revised some of his ideas (as described in section 3.3), it was only in small points he could not have known without digging. The use of colonnades was not supported by finds, no traces of an altar screen were found (although this does not mean there was not one) and the level of the main church floor was significantly higher than in Dahari's reconstruction, requiring steps to gain access from the lower narthex floor.

An omission in his report that could be noted is that the ground-plan and reconstruction do not mark the location of cave B, which (situated as it was at the eastern end of the northern aisle) would have attracted the attention of worshippers. He also interpreted the cistern under the southern aisle as a storeroom despite several sources mentioning its use.[468] Finally, he speculated that the missing marble architectural members (column drums) had been used in plaster production because no lime deposits could be found around Hagia Koryphē.[469] However, such deposits do appear in the vicinity (sections 1.5.2 and 2.3) and the elements which separated the nave from the aisles and supported the roof were not marble columns but pillars built of red granite blocks.[470]

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[467] Dahari 2000: 36, figure 11.
[468] Dahari 2000: 31.
[469] Dahari 2000: 35.
[470] Even in the *katholikon* the use of marble was relatively limited in revetments and liturgical furniture. The columns and capitals were carved out of granite and plastered (section 3.2).

Dahari's analysis of the sources begs for revision. His suggestion that the summit basilica was dedicated to the Virgin Mary (*Theotokos*, Mother of God) and that Prokopios' account refers to this rather than the *katholikon* (section 3.1.1) cannot be accepted.[471] The connection of Mary with the Burning Bush in Christian theology is clear, because her virginity was not consumed by giving birth to Christ, like the Bush was not consumed by the fire of God's presence within it. This connection was only meaningful at the *katholikon* which incorporated the Burning Bush itself and made no sense for the summit church, which was probably dedicated to the prophet Moses, as mentioned by al-Maqrīzī (section 3.1.5).

Furthermore, the notion that monastic writers like Anastasios avoided mentioning the suggested Marian consecration of the Hagia Koryphē church because they did not agree with Justinian's choice ignores the respect commanded by the wish of a donor, especially an imperial donor, in the Byzantine world.[472] It was rare for churches or chapels to have their dedication changed unless a *damnatio memoriae* was intended. The names of Justinian and Theodora have been mentioned during every service at the Sinai (arch)bishopric since the mid-sixth century and their memory would not have been desecrated so close to their dates of death with such an act of defiance.

Another argument advanced by Dahari to support his dedication theory identified the Greek letters *ΘK* carved on several architectural members as monograms of the *Theotokos*, the Mother of God.[473] However, such letters were

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[471] Dahari 2000: 29-34.
[472] Dahari 2000: 30.
[473] Dahari 2000: 32-4. Béatrice Dansette adopted Dahari's position on the basis on this argument;

often used as masons' marks by Early Christian builders in Horeb and elsewhere (a point Dahari himself made) and several other letter combinations appear on the summit ruins as well. Dahari also suggested that the monumental bronze 'Cross of Moses' (figure 64), incised with scenes of the prophet's Sinaitic moments, was transferred to the Monastery from the ruined Hagia Koryphē basilica.[474] If this were true, it would represent a further argument against his theory for a Marian dedication and in favour of a Mosaic one.

The last point in Uzi Dahari's account which needs to be commented upon is his suggestion that the collapse of the basilica was due to its abandonment by the monks because their numbers had dwindled in the early Islamic period and they could not tend to its needs. Sources reveal that the number of monks remained significant throughout these centuries (section 4.1.1) and even Muslims were added to the pilgrims (section 4.1). Furthermore, and regardless of the situation, it is highly unlikely that the monks would allow their most hallowed site and its imperial church to fall into ruin. It is much more plausible that a natural disaster was the reason for its demise (section 4.1.3).

3.4. A monastic centre

Apart from protection against aggressors, the sixth-century imperial building project consolidated Sinaitic status in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Horeb had barely benefited by the Constantinian Holy Land programme when the early fourth-century tower was erected under the auspices of empress Helena (true or not, this

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see Dansette 2001: 70.

story was obviously a solid part of monastic tradition, see section 2.2).[475] The area's inclusion into the second largest Holy Land programme, the one by Justinian, placed it alongside the foremost Palestinian pilgrimage destinations, Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth. From the second half of the sixth century onwards, 'Mount Sinai' would be a station in most Holy Land itineraries despite its considerable distance from the other sites and the difficulties associated with its visitation.

The flow of pilgrims must have had a positive impact on the economy of the area and ensured plentiful resources for the frugal community of ascetics. In a sixth- or seventh-century caravan account list, a Father Martyrios from Sinai is mentioned as entrusting the sum of 270½ *solidi* to a small company of traders, supposedly to transfer them to a larger episcopal see for safety.[476] This remarkable sum, the equivalent of fifty-two years' wages for a labourer or 1.23 kg of solid gold,[477] must have been gathered from the contributions of pilgrims adhering to various dogmatic groups, Monophysite and Chalcedonian, Coptic, Syriac and Armenian, travelling from all over Christendom (sections 2.4.6 and 4.1.1, the terms are here used to denote Churches rather than national groups).[478]

The cosmopolitan character of the anchoretic and later coenobitic community of Horeb has already been noted (section 2.2). Greeks populated almost exclusively the ranks of Sinai monks since the fifteenth century, mainly as a consequence of the

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[474] Dahari 2000: 62. On the Cross, see Weitzmann 1980: 158; Weitzmann & Ševčenko 1982; Oikonomakē-Papadopoulou 1990: 264-5, 280; *Egeria* 2008: 265-6.
[475] On the main Holy Land programmes, see Maraval 1985: 66-72.
[476] Kraemer 1958: 251-60; Mayerson 1963: 165-6, 169; Mayerson 1964: 188; Mayerson 1994: 239.
[477] On the numismatic system of the Early Christian period and equivalents in labour and gold, see John 1992: 110-1, 231-2.
[478] For the sixth-century Syrian pilgrim Abraham of Kaškar (died 588), see Baumstark 1922: 130.

increased hostility towards the Church of Rome after the 1439 Council of Florence[479] and the fall of Constantinople in 1453.[480] However, earlier centuries were marked by an ecumenical approach, when the site attracted the entire *Orbis Christianus*. This policy of acceptance allowed Christian Arabs, Georgians, Slavs, Monophysite Coptics, Syrians, Armenians and even Roman Catholics (deemed schismatic after - 1054 but disliked by eastern Christians before that) to co-exist within the Monastery walls.[481] Icons and manuscripts of various origins and styles must have once furnished chapels dedicated to these heterodox rites.[482] It was this distance from fanatical theological debates, coupled with the inclusion of Sinai within the Islamic world, which prevented iconoclasts from eliminating the now unique works of representational religious art during their heyday (730-842, see section 3.2).[483]

Although the attraction of 'Mount Sinai' predictably emanated from Hagia Koryphē, from the late sixth century to the early years of Muslim rule the reputation of Sinaitic saintly figures added an extra appeal for pious visitors.[484] Preeminent among them was John 'Klimax' (early seventh century, see section 2.2), an abbot of the coenobium at the fortress, later to be canonised as a saint.

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[479] Jullien 1893: 106.
[480] Skrobucha 1966: 78-9. On the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Hellenisation of the art in the Monastery, see Weitzmann 1980: 96, 154. On the destruction of Latin manuscripts, see Weitzmann 1980: 154.
[481] Grēgoriadēs 1875: 72-6; Labib 1961: 71; Weitzmann 1980: 91, 154; Meimarēs 1985: 11, 15, 66; Tarnanidēs 1988: 22-7; Mayerson 1994: 238-9; Chitty 1995: 168, 170; Dansette 2001: 78; Wolff 2003: 210; Aleksidze *et al.* 2005: 361-2. A Benedictine monk from Verona, Bononius, lived several years in the Monastery before dying *circa* 1026; see Labib 1961: 33. An 'Armenian monastery' on Mount Sinai, mentioned in a late seventh-early eighth-century Armenian text, was probably a reference to a sizeable community of monks or anchorites; see Anastase 1884: 398. On the presence and donations of Christian Arabs to the Monastery after the Muslim conquest, see Labib 1961: 71; Ratliff 2008: 15-6.
[482] Weitzmann 1980: 153.
[483] Monophysiticism was never popular among the Horeb anchorites; see Grossmann 2002: 46-7.
[484] Maraval 1985: 310.

John had received his monastic tonsure at Hagia Koryphē at the age of twenty[485] and was probably commemorated with an inscription on an arch above the steps leading to the summit itself (section 1.5.3, figure 16).

John's best-known work, *The Heavenly Ladder* (*Klimax*), remains the most important book of Orthodox monasticism.[486] In it, he described the thirty spiritual steps which ascetics had to climb to reach the love of God, the ultimate step of the 'Heavenly Ladder' (for a visual representation of the *Klimax* on a twelfth-century icon, see figure 114). 'Klimax' himself had lived in a cell for twenty years prior to becoming abbot and he returned to it before dying.[487]

The Heavenly Ladder was translated into Latin and was read across Christianity.[488] A letter by pope Gregory I (on the throne 590-604), dated 1 September 600, to a certain John, abbot of Sinai, could have been addressed to John 'Klimax.' It mentioned the pope's donation of apparel for a 'hospital' (perhaps the *phylaktērion*, see section 3.2) and clothes to the Monastery.[489] John's reputation enhanced the status of Horeb and attracted monks, solitaries and pilgrims.[490]

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[485] Dahari 2000: 30.

[486] For the Greek text and a Latin translation, see Joannis 1860a; for an English translation, see John 1959; for an excellent brief summary of the book's teaching, see Skrobucha 1966: 37-42; for various views on the dates of John's life, see Anastase 1902b: 6; Amantos 1953: 20-1; John 1959: 13-7; Huber 1979: 210-11; Kazhdan & Nelson 1991; Chitty 1995: 172-5; *Synaxis* 1998: 161-2; Duffy 1999: 2, 2 notes 4-5; Dahari 2000: 23.

[487] His cell is traditionally identified with a rock shelter at the *wādī* of Tholas near Horeb; see Labib 1961: 12; Dahari 2000: 69; *Egeria* 2008: 87-8.

[488] Eddé *et al.* 1997: 102.

[489] Gregorius 1899: 261; Eckenstein 1921: 130-1; Amantos 1953: 22; Labib 1961: 23; Maraval 1985: 308 note 467; Chitty 1995: 170 (Derwas Chitty refuted the identification of this John with John 'Klimax,' page 173); Dahari 2000: 23. One of Anastasios' narrations mentioned that the donation was asked for by the *paramonarios* of Hagia Koryphē's church – evidently the Justinianic basilica; see Amantos 1953: 22 note 3; for the story of the *paramonarios* and his duties, see section 2.4.6.

[490] Kamil 1991: 21. Other important figures of the late sixth and the seventh century were Hēsychios and Philotheos, see Skrobucha 1966: 42-3.

The first volumes of the library of the Monastery of Saint Catherine must have arrived at this period. The earliest ones could have been offered by the emperor alongside icons and other furnishings. Many ascetics were literate and carried with them theological works, in addition to liturgical books necessary for the ecclesiastical life of the community.[491] Some were even keen to invest manual labour for the acquisition or use of valuable manuscripts.[492] However, no evidence of a scriptorium appears to exist from such an early date – although it was a feature of the Monastery's life in later centuries.[493]

The erection of the fortress around the church of the Virgin Mary at the foot of Horeb offered the anchorites a safe shelter and a focus of cult. In earlier times the only form of organised life was *laurai*, small monasteries of five to ten anchorites around a master (section 2.2). It seems that the process of the anchoretic community's transformation into a coenobitic one started in the later sixth century,[494] although the paradigm of eremitic life remained strong in the Sinaitic psyche, inspired by John 'Klimax's' writings.[495] Alongside settled monks, solitaries persisted[496] and indeed continue their exercise to this day (for practical reasons, the word 'monk' will be used in future chapters to denote both groups).

The archaeological remains from this sizeable community at Horeb extended beyond the imperially-funded structures described in sections 3.2 and

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[491] On contemporary ascetics casually using scrolls with theological works, see John 1992: 37.
[492] The cost of one New Testament manuscript on fine parchment was reported as being three gold coins, or seven months' worth of manual labour; see John 1992: 110-11.
[493] Mayerson 1983: 55-6.
[494] Huber 1979: 202-3.
[495] Skrobucha 1966: 43-4.
[496] For medieval period testimonies, see Dansette 2001: 72-3.

3.3 (the fortress and its great church, the *phylaktērion* and workshops and the summit basilical complex). Although their exact dates are impossible to determine, up to forty-one building complexes from the Early Christian period survive on the slopes and valleys of the mountain and allow the reconstruction of an everyday life devoted to agriculture as well as prayer.[497]

The complexes include isolated chapels, fourteen small 'monasteries' (*laurai* is the correct term, due to their diminutive size),[498] dams, water conduits, natural pools and built reservoirs (to collect, channel and store rainwater) and wells.[499] A typical Horeb *laura* included a central building with a chapel, orchards and adjacent gardens usually around a well for irrigation, water conduits and at least one cell.[500] The gardens supported both nearby solitaries and *laurai* inhabitants. Their abodes were connected with paths, sometimes stepped and resembling the 'Path of Moses' (section 1.5.3).[501]

By the early seventh century Horeb, once a remote wilderness, was pullulating with holy men busy leading devout lives which revolved around Hagia Koryphē. Together with the hundreds of families living near the *phylaktērion* at the foot of the mountain, the large groups of pilgrims and their escorts, the local Bedouin and the monks resident in the fortress coenobium, they had turned the desert into a city, an economically sound, socially diverse and spiritually important community.

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[497] Dahari 2000: 150-8.
[498] Dahari 2000: 48.
[499] Finkelstein 1985: 42-60, figures B-S, 1-16; Dahari 2000: 38-49.
[500] Dahari 2000: 41-2.
[501] Finkelstein 1985: 56-60, figures 15-16; Dahari 2000: 47-8.

A few decades later the Sinai Peninsula was incorporated into the Islamic empire, but Horeb remained an important religious centre (sections 4.1 and 4.1.1). By the mid-ninth century it became an independent bishopric (probably it was so since the eighth century[502]) and Constantinos was its first bishop.[503] He appeared at the list of participants in the Eighth Catholic Ecumenical (or Fourth Roman Catholic) Synod of Constantinople (869-870) which deposed the patriarch Photius. He signed himself as '*misericordia Dei episcopus Synai.*'[504] It was not only the holy sites like Hagia Koryphē which helped sustain Sinaitic prestige among eastern Christianity. The ancient anchoretic and monastic tradition proved to be an added motivation for those aspiring to attain sainthood. Horeb, 'Mount Sinai,' became the definitive destination for ascetics through the ages, the 'monastic ultimate.'

3.5. Conclusion

During the brief period from the mid-sixth to the early seventh century the Horeb landscape was indelibly marked by the gifts and fruits of an imperial project. Heretofore Horeb had been an important albeit marginal destination. Anchorites and pilgrims visited it but their numbers did not compare with those flocking to the easily reachable and, since the fourth century, splendidly housed Palestinian holy places. If Mount Sinai was to be incorporated in the Holy Land circuit, it had to provide security, accessibility and splendour. Justinian's project ensured all three.

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[502] Amantos 1953: 25.
[503] Meistermann 1909: 120; Eckenstein 1921: 137; Amantos 1953: 28, 82; Skrobucha 1966: 35; Kamil 1991: 27; Dahari 2000: 54.
[504] Mansi 1771: 194.

The changes envisaged by the emperor for Sinai served multiple agenda, ecclesiastical, military and political. He 'invented' a major pilgrimage destination by dramatically enlarging its reception facilities (fortress, *phylaktērion* / 'hospital,' workshops / kitchens and probably Raithō seafront monastery and associated road stations) and by ensuring the safety of both resident clergy and travellers. Impressive new buildings like the *katholikon* (548-560), dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and the Hagia Koryphē basilica (560-565), probably dedicated to Moses, were decorated with mosaics and icons of the highest quality. The nuanced iconographic programme of the *katholikon* mosaics communicated the message of Christian orthodoxy against the Monophysite tide sweeping Egypt and Palestine. A library, probably inaugurated through imperial munificence, provided the impetus for the intellectual production of John 'Klimax' (among others). His work brought kudos from across Christianity to Horeb. A new life had been injected into the remote anchoretic abode.

Beyond their religious significance, Justinian's buildings had a military character. This aspect was recently questioned and the fortress was identified as a simple monastery since its foundation.[505] However, the most accurate description of its original purpose must be that it was a defensive structure incorporating storage and manufacture facilities and functioning as a centre of cult for anchoretic communities and solitaries dispersed in the wider area.[506] The synoecism which resulted in a densely populated coenobium within the walls of

[505] Dahari 2000: 63.
[506] The total estimated number of ecclesiastics inhabiting Horeb and its surrounding mountains and valleys in the sixth century was approximately 414, see Dahari 2000: 94, table 4.

the fortress happened only gradually from the later sixth century. The fact that these walls endured several attacks by humans and by natural elements for fifteen centuries further testifies to their original defensive character.

The threats which dwellers and visitors had to face were most probably Bedouin raids rather than organised attacks by trained armies. The gradual relaxation of imperial control, or rather the nervous effort required to sustain it in areas increasingly remote from Constantinople, may be the explanation behind such fortified structures. The Horeb buildings can be compared to the contemporaneous walls of the Pharan settlement[507] and demonstrate a shift of self-governed populations towards guarding themselves against occasional hazards rather than relying on troops sent from larger administrative and military centres.[508] The transfer of families of soldiers instead of a military unit to the *phylaktērion* (section 3.1.2) further testifies to such a policy.[509]

In conclusion, Justinian's building programme made an orthodox religious statement within a heterodox milieu, protected and promoted a community of anchorites, gradually altered the character of their society into a coenobitic one, managed a newly created wave of pilgrims, held the ever-threatening Bedouin at bay and consolidated imperial prestige among all these populations by planting a deep footing of centralised authority into a distant and marginal site. However, the buildings did not alter the Sinaitic topography in essence.[510] The main landmarks were set since at least the fourth century and subsequent structures, impressive as

[507] Grossmann 2002: 36-9, 54-6.
[508] Mayerson 1986: 44.
[509] Popescu-Belis 2001: 111.

they were, did not change their locations or configuration but rather respected them and were built around them, literally 'setting them in stone.'

Recent archaeological work has allowed the full appreciation of this programme. Prokopios' account, often discredited because of supposed inconsistencies, has been proven accurate. Excavation finds complemented his evidence, as did later accounts by Eutychios, the *Synaxarium*, 'Abu'l-Makārim' and al-Maqrīzī and also the reliable and detailed tradition preserved within the Sinaitic community.

In the years following the death of Justinian and especially in the early part of the seventh century, owing to wars against the Sassanians, the fragile system of the *foederati*, the confederates of the Byzantines who guarded on their behalf frontier populations (section 2.1), became redundant and insecurity prevailed.[511] This did not deter a sizeable and cosmopolitan anchoretic and later monastic community from gathering on the mountains of South Sinai. They used natural resources and Biblical associations to anchor their presence in this inhospitable land and negotiated a delicate coexistence with the bellicose locals, sometimes with the help of the armed laymen dispatched by Justinian.

Hagia Koryphē remained the focal point of this community. It was now endowed with a magnificent church of its own and serviced by two cisterns which ensured its self-sufficiency – further proof of the programme's defensive character. The basilica incorporated earlier structures within its foundations without obliterating them (section 2.3). The reason for such respect towards the humble

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[510] Dahari 2000: 63.
[511] Mayerson 1964: 191; Grossmann 2002: 39.

fourth-century chapel could have been the divine inspiration of its creator, Julian Saba, as mentioned in Ephraem's *Hymn* 20 (section 2.4.2):[512]

> 'And Saba stood in prayer / In the holy cave on Mount Sinai
> When suddenly he envisioned / The church's plan and dimensions.'

By demonstrating such respect, the architect of the basilica (perhaps the same Stephanos who built the *katholikon*) struck a balance between his need to create something befitting the majesty of the celebrated event (the theophany and delivery of the Law) and the anchorites' wish to preserve their tradition. A survival of the marginal within the imperial could be read in this act of symbolic enshrinement. It was the first appearance of the Horeb community's ability to negotiate the will of central authority while clinging onto its Sinaitic identity. As will be examined in the following chapter, this idiosyncrasy ensured the community's continued existence through adversities and into the modern era (section 4.4).

The ancient prohibition to spend the night on the summit continued to be observed. Even the basilica's overseer, the *paramonarios*, lived nearby rather than in it. The fact that the *avaton* persisted at a time when as many as a hundred anchorites inhabited Horeb (outside the fortress) testifies to the awe Hagia Koryphē inspired. Crowned by a granite church covered in white plaster (therefore visible from afar) and adorned with *opus sectile*, mosaics, glass lamps and probably icons and church furniture imported from Constantinople, the centerpiece of the Horeb landscape incorporated the main holy locales of the Old Testament narrative and looked as beautiful as it was sacred.

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[512] English translation in Dahari 2000: 29. It was not possible to quote the Syriac original.

4. PLACE OF DEVOTION

The period between the crossing of the Sinai Peninsula by the warriors of Islam in the 630s, on their way to conquer Egypt and spread the kerygma of Muḥammad,[513] and the first doubting of the identification of Hagia Koryphē with the Biblical 'Mount of the Law' in 1822 seems too long to cover within a single chapter. A large volume of literature on Horeb was produced during this period in the 'Latin' West and the Byzantine and Islamic East and numerous buildings and artefacts were accumulated on Hagia Koryphē and the Monastery at its foot.

However, the metaphysical importance, ritual significance and landscape configuration of the area changed little. Monks and anchorites carried on inhabiting the holy wilderness in symbiosis with a nomadic lay population (sections 2.1, 2.1.1 and 2.2.1) even after the latter's conversion to Islam (section 4.1.2). Christian pilgrims continued to visit the sacred places glorified through the Justinianic building programme (section 4.1.1). The discovery (*inventio*) of the relics of Saint Catherine on the summit of Hagia Aikaterinē (section 4.1.4) and the establishment of the Palestine Crusader states in the late eleventh century (section 4.2) simply increased their numbers. Pious Muslims followed in their footsteps from as early as the seventh century and inaugurated a tradition of patronage (sections 4.1 and 4.2.1). Even the mosque which was erected on the summit stood on the ruins of the

[513] On the crossing of ᶜAmr ibn al-ᶜĀṣ and his army into Egypt through Sinai in the late 630s, see

basilica (section 4.1.3), merely adding an extra layer of veneration to a spot consecrated since the third century. The main characteristics of the Horeb landscape had already crystallised and additions rather than changes were effected to them.

Three phases can be separated within this long period. The 'Early Islamic Period' (section 4.1) stretches from the 630s to the Fāṭimid era, when Horeb witnessed a wave of Muslim interest (section 4.2.1). The political link of the Sinai Peninsula to the Empire of Constantinople had been severed but religious and cultural ties remained. The coming of Islam did not cause grievance to the Sinai clerics although it affected their way of living (section 4.1.2). The discovery of the relics of Saint Catherine (section 4.1.4) and the continuous interest of Christian and Muslim communities kept pilgrim revenue and pious donations coming in, thus ensuring the survival of the Sinaitic community.

Section 4.2 covers the 'Age of Pilgrimage,' roughly corresponding to the Fāṭimid (969-1171), Ayyūbid (1171-1250) and Mamlūk (1250-1517) periods. The geographic proximity of 'Latin' Christians to Sinai was due to the foundation of Crusader states (from 1099) and the positive attitude of the Fāṭimid and Mamlūk elites towards pilgrim travel in general and towards 'Mount Sinai' in particular (section 4.2.1), and this made Horeb a favourite destination and a Christian landmark, known and revered from the Middle East to the British Isles. Travel accounts, combined with artefacts preserved within the Monastery walls or excavated at Hagia Koryphē, reveal a period of cosmopolitanism and growth.[514]

Walser 1979: 224-5; Cytryn-Silverman 2001: 5-6.

[514] Mention will only be made to works of art that directly relate to Hagia Koryphē and complement arguments of the present study.

The year 1517 marks the beginning of the 'Ottoman Period' (section 4.3) and was a turning point in Sinaitic history. It witnessed both the Ottoman conquest of Egypt and the publication of the *Disputation of Martin Luther on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences* in Germany. These unrelated events did much to slow the influx of pilgrims from West and Central Europe. The Ottomans were suspicious of pilgrims and the Protestant followers of Martin Luther (German, 1483-1546) utterly opposed the tradition of Holy Land visitation. The collapse of the Byzantine Empire in 1453 and the opening of new trade routes to the Far East had already isolated the monastic community (section 4.3.2). However, the paucity of European sources during the seventeenth and the eighteenth century was counterbalanced by Greek-language material, demonstrating an active intellectual life in the Monastery (sections 4.3.3 and 4.3.3.1).

4.1. The Early Islamic Period

By the late sixth century the importance of Hagia Koryphē and Horeb had made this remote spot a popular destination for pilgrims, itinerant monks and lay visitors. Legend reports that about that time a young Arab from Mecca on a caravan trip stopped outside the walls of the fortress erected by Justinian. Frederick Henniker, visiting twelve centuries later, in 1820, gave in his *Notes during a Visit to Egypt, Nubia, the Oasis, Mount Sinai, and Jerusalem* the following version of the well-known story:[515]

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[515] Henniker 1823: 234. The story was also told to A. Morison in 1697; see Morison 1704: 95.

> 'It happened that Mohammed, when an unknown youth, was encamped in this neighbourhood, an eagle was observed to hover over him, and one of the monks predicted his future greatness. Mohammed, well pleased with the gipsy tale, made liberal promises to the convent; a piece of paper was produced, but Mohammed, being unable to write, smeared his hand all over with ink, and made his mark. In about fifteen years afterwards the augury was fulfilled; the soothsayer hastened to Mecca, and claimed performance of the note of hand. Mohammed kept his promise, and swore by the token that the convent should remain for ever sacred; that the country, as far as the eye can scan, should belong to it; and all the inhabitants thereon its slaves. The country produces nothing but rocks and Arabs, and the Arabs are less desirable than the rocks.'

Despite the charm of such an anecdote, it is improbable that a caravan, such as the young Muḥammad may have followed, would have strayed as far south as Horeb, which, despite its prominent position in pilgrimage itineraries, was far from important trade routes. The story was obviously concocted to justify the so-called *ahtname*, a declaration or decree in writing which protected the Monastery and its inhabitants and was supposedly written by ᶜAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib on 7 July 623 and signed with the imprint of Muḥammad's own hand.[516]

A late Ottoman copy of the declaration survives in the Monastery (figure 65), purportedly replacing an early sixteenth-century copy granted by the Ottoman sultan Selim I (1465-1520, ruled 1512-1520) upon removal to Constantinople of the seventh-century original after the 1517 conquest.[517] The earliest references to the document date from the beginning of the sixteenth century and it seems that

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[516] Burckhardt (1822: 546-8) was the first to critically examine and reject the authenticity of the document; see also Eckenstein 1921: 134-5; Golubovich 1923: 90-105; Rabino 1938: 39-40; Amantos 1953: 26-7; Skrobucha 1966: 57-9; *Perigraphē* 1978: 118; Hobbs 1995: 159-61; *Egeria* 2008: 243-4.

[517] The removal of the declaration by Selim I was mentioned by F. Pigafetta; see Pigafetta 1837: 37. Selim I has also been connected to the founding of the mosque within the Monastery walls. The story tells of a young Greek priest, a favourite of the sultan, who died at the Monastery causing the ruler's wrath against the monks. He was only appeased by the erection of the mosque; see Burckhardt 1822: 543-4. The story closely resembles the one involving the Fāṭimid caliph al-Ḥākim in 1009, which seems more plausible altogether (section 4.2.1) but was rejected by Burckhardt.

this was the actual date of its production.[518] Despite the obviously fictitious character of the story and the associated article, it was not unusual for Christian communities in Islamic lands to claim special protection status granted to them by the Prophet or one of his followers.[519] Such 'titles' betray the insecurity of non-Muslim communities resisting conversion but also testify to the power of such 'official' documents and the respect emanating from them.

'Mount Sinai' features several times in the Qur'ān.[520] It is the site of God's meeting with Moses and of the delivery of His covenant in *Sūrat al-Baqara* (The Cow), II:63 and II:93, in *Sūrat al-Nisā'* (The Women), IV:154, in *Sūrat al-Aᶜrāf* (The Heights), VII:143-146 and VII:171, in *Sūrat Maryam*, XIX:52, in *Sūrat Ṭā' Hā'*, XX:80, and in *Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ* (The Story), XXVIII:44. In *Sūrat al-Mu'minūn* (The Believers), XXIII:20, Mount Sinai is the place where the olive tree grows:

> 'The tree which grows on Mount Sinai gives oil and a condiment for all to eat.' **(Text XLIV)**

In *Sūrat al-Tīn* (The Fig), XCV:2, 'Mount Sinai' is mentioned in the same verse and next to Mecca as a place of prophetic law handed to Moses. Finally, *Sūrat al-Ṭūr* (The Mountain), LII, is named after the Biblical 'Mount of the Law.'

It is evident that references to Mount Sinai in the Holy Book are related to the Biblical 'Mount of the Law' and not to Hagia Koryphē and are inspired by the text of *Exodus* rather than by experience of the place. The prophetic figure of Moses seems to be the reason behind these repeated references since the Decalogue is the pillar of the Abrahamic-Mosaic tradition which both Christianity

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[518] Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006: 33.
[519] Ratliff 2008: 14-5.

and Islam inherited.[521] Thus, 'the mountain' symbolises the contact between God and His prophet and the Law which preceded Muḥammad's revelation.

Only the brief mention of Mount Sinai as an olive-bearing mountain strikes a non-Biblical note. The association was probably made in order to enhance the blessed status of the olive tree, as designated in *Sūrat al-Nūr* (The Light), XXIV:35. However, the cultivation of olive trees around the fortress and the production of olive oil within the enclosure are well attested by the survival of the sixth-century oil press at its northwestern corner (section 3.2). Probably some of the realities of Horeb life were widely known within the trading and caravan communities of the Ḥijāz, to which the Prophet belonged. The Qur'ānic reference to olive-growing is the focus of al-Muqaddasī's (945/6-1000) mention of Mount Sinai (*circa* 985), which was vague and not based on personal experience.[522] Mount Sinai's prominence in the Qur'ān resulted in the respect Hagia Koryphē commanded from followers of the new faith.[523] By the mid-seventh century a tradition of Muslim veneration had already been generated since Anastasios deplored the 'pollution' ('defilement') of the summit by 'the present nation' (the Muslims).[524] **(Text XLV)**

A valuable direct source is the reference in some papyri found in Nessana (present-day town of Nitzana in the Negev) to a certain Abū Rashīd, a provincial governor or *symvoulos* of the town, asking twice for guides for a trip to the Holy

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[520] Skrobucha 1966: 53-4; Hobbs 1995: 165-8.
[521] El Cheikh 2004: 3.
[522] Mukaddasi 1897: 65; Le Strange 1890: 73. On al-Muqaddasī, see Le Strange 1890: 5-6; Eckenstein 1921: 143-4; Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 246.
[523] Other Christian landmarks were less fortunate. For references to defilement or plundering of churches and monasteries, see Tritton 1970: 43-60.
[524] Author's translation. Anastase 1902a: 61; Anastase 1902b: 10 note 4, 45-6 note 3.

Mount (*toursina*, from the Arabic *Ṭūr Sīnā'* for 'Mount Sinai') to be paid for by the town in March 684 (or perhaps 669 or 699) and December 683:[525]

> 'In the name of Almighty God! Abū Rashīd, Governor, to George of Nessana. Thanks be to God, etc. etc. When Abu'l-Mughīra, mawla of ᶜUrwa ibn Abū Sufyān, comes to you, be kind enough to furnish him [with] a man from Nessana bound to guide him on the trip to the Holy Mount. Also furnish the man's pay. Written in the month of March, twelfth indiction, by the hand of Theodore.' **(Text XLVI)**

In 683, the person making the pilgrimage was Abū Rashīd's wife, Ubayya:[526]

> 'In the name of Almighty God! Abū Rashīd, Governor, to the people of Nessana. Thanks be to God, etc. etc. When my wife Ubayya comes to you, furnish her a man bound to direct her on the road to Mount Sinai. Also furnish the man's pay. Written December 5, twelfth indiction.' **(Text XLVII)**

The cost of travel appears to have been substantial (a sixth-century Nessana papyrus mentions 3½ *solidi*, see section 3.4 for the same journey), therefore it was made clear in both notes that the town of Nessana had to cover it.[527]

When al-Maqrīzī (1364-1442, see also section 3.1.5), the Egyptian historian of the Mamlūk period, examined the Sinai Monastery among the other Christian monasteries of Egypt, he repeated some imaginary descriptions found in Yāqūt (1179-1229, see section 1.4) but also gave new information regarding pilgrimage to Hagia Koryphē. He mentioned a saying by ᶜAbdallāh ibn ᶜUmar (circa 614-693):[528]

> 'Only go on pilgrimage to three mosques. The mosque of the Prophet of God, the mosque of Al-Ḥaram and the mosque of Al-Aqsa, but renounce [the one on] Sinai and do not go there.'

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[525] Kraemer 1958: 205-6, papyrus 72; Negev 1977b: 78; Mayerson 1982: 47 note 10; Negev 1986: 129; Mayerson 1994: 242. The Greek term '*symvoulos*' was used instead of the Arabic '*amīr*;' see Hoyland 2006: 401, 401 note 33.
[526] Kraemer 1958: 207-8, papyrus 73; Negev 1977b: 78; Mayerson 1982: 47 note 10; Negev 1986: 129; Mayerson 1994: 242.
[527] Kraemer 1958: 257; Mayerson 1989: 73.
[528] Translated by the author after the French tradition in al-Makrizi 1908: 202-3. It has not been possible to locate the Arabic original.

If this chrestomathy actually dates from ᶜAbdallāh ibn ᶜUmar's time, it is practically contemporary with the Nessana papyri and testifies not only to a tradition of visitation to Hagia Koryphē but also to its importance. Even if the advice is negative, Sinai appears in the same sentence as Medina, Mecca and Jerusalem.

A similar place was reserved for Mount Sinai in the words of the *qāḍi* Abū Ishāq al-Buhturi (a member of the Quraysh tribe), quoted in *The Book of Arousing Souls to Visit Jerusalem's Holy Walls* by the Damascene Burhān al-Dīn ibn al-Firkāh al-Fazāri (1262-1329). It was stated that prayer was unacceptable at seven places, among them the Kaᶜaba, the Rock of Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives, Mount Arafat and Mount Sinai, for fear of some violation occurring when standing on them.[529] In his 1351 *Book of Inciting Desire*, Abu'l-Fida′ of Hebron (died 1429) quoted Ibn ᶜAbbās (618/9-687) as saying that the Kaᶜaba was built by Abraham with Ishmael's help with materials from five mountains, one of them being Mount Sinai.[530] Both texts were influenced by Qur′ānic references to the Biblical mountain. However, combined with the aphorism in al-Maqrīzī, they confirm the respect which lay at the beginning of the Muslim tradition of Hagia Koryphē visitation.[531]

It is possible that the mosque on the summit, mentioned in epigraphic sources from the Fāṭimid period onwards (section 4.2.1), or at least a prayer place, was actually created in the first decades of Muslim rule.[532] The small niche of cave A under the present mosque of Hagia Koryphē faces south

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[529] Matthews 1949: xii, 16, 143 note 47.
[530] Matthews 1949: xiii, 76.
[531] Other books dedicated to non-*ḥajj* pilgrimage fail to mention Mount Sinai in any context, for example al-Harawī's (died 1215) *Book of Pilgrimage Sites*, written in the later twelfth century; see al-Harawī 1957.

(section 1.5.3, figure 14) and could have been the *mihrab* of this early prayer place, the cave of Moses itself.[533] However, these hypotheses cannot be verified by archaeological methods. By the early eighth century the local lay population was already following Islam (section 4.1.2) and it is likely that the collapse of the basilica on the summit (section 4.1.3) gave further opportunities to lay a claim on the venerated site. Hagia Koryphē became a destination of *ziyāra(t)* (visitation), a tradition which continues to this day (section 4.2.1).[534]

Another interesting story, preserved in a work compiled in the fifteenth century from an eleventh-century manuscript, can be attributed to the early Islamic period. When ᶜAmr ibn al-ᶜĀṣ (*circa* 583/9-664), the conqueror of Egypt, asked the Coptic chief of the natives of Upper Egypt for his treasure in the year 641, the chief claimed he had none. Enquiries revealed that he was in contact with a monk in Mount Sinai, to whom ᶜAmr wrote in Greek and in the Coptic's name. The monk brought back a bronze jar containing a letter which indicated the location of the chief's treasure. ᶜAmr had the Coptic executed and kept the gold.[535] The story is probably a combination of formulaic narrations preserving a tradition of treasure-hiding related with Sinai and its monks (for

[532] Bedouin tradition assigns the mosque to the early seventh century; see Hobbs 1995: 169.
[533] The niche was first mentioned as being used for Muslim prayer in A. Morison's narrative of his 1697 trip to Sinai; see Morison 1704: 96-7.
[534] For a gender-based reading of *ziyāra*, see Tapper 1990: 247-53; on tomb-visitation *ziyāra*, see Taylor 1999: 62-79.
[535] Ḥijjāwī 1996: 227-8.

recent treasure stories, see section 2.2.1). Despite the unfortunate end of the Coptic chief, no trouble seems to have befallen the Greek monk.[536]

In conclusion, all sources and evidence suggest that few tribulations were experienced in Horeb as a result of the coming of Islam.[537] Apart from the sanctity of Hagia Koryphē, it was the absence of anything strategically or economically attractive (rather than the Prophet's declaration) that achieved this.[538] Even the Mecca pilgrimage route from Spain, North Africa and Egypt (*darb al-ḥajj*) went through the central rather than the southern part of the Sinai Peninsula.[539] Philip Mayerson's hypothesis that the crossing of the Muslim army into Egypt happened via a South Sinai route is generally not adopted by historians, but even if it were correct, no evidence exists of a disruption to the anchoretic community's life.[540]

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[536] The devious Coptic (a Monophysite) was connected to a Melkite (Orthodox Christian of the Chalcedonian rite) Greek monk in Horeb, an unlikely connection given the Christological controversy that still raged in the seventh century. Coptic populations actually welcomed the Islamic conquest as a liberation from the Chalcedonian oppression of Byzantine rule; see Eddé *et al.* 1997: 35, 60-1, 66.

[537] Philip Mayerson claimed that in only two instances was the transition into Muslim rule in the Sinai violent, in Eboda and Pharan, the latter being the nearest bishopric to Horeb; see Mayerson 1964: 196-7.

[538] Monks were originally exempt from capital tax (as destitute) but from the early eighth century a small tax was imposed upon them in Egypt; see Eddé *et al.* 1997: 58; Cytryn-Silverman 2001: 6 (poll tax). However, the Sinai monks were traditionally free from taxes; see Stern 1964a: 39.

[539] Kamil 1991: 10.

[540] Mayerson 1964: 156-69, 177-99. Mayerson based his hypothesis on the following passage of Theophanis' *Chronographia*:

> 'The Arabs were upset, went to their compatriots and showed them the way to the district of Gaza, the entrance of the desert extending toward Sinai, and exceptionally rich.' **(Text XLVIII).**

Translation in Mayerson 1964: 157 note 7. Mayerson interpreted this text as referring to an Arab infiltration into the south of the peninsula through Aila, into Pharan and then north through Gaza at the years 633-4; see Mayerson 1964: 165-6. The evidence in Sebeos' *History of Heraclius* (in Armenian) seems to support an Arab infiltration into South Sinai, namely Pharan; see Sebeos 1904: 98; English translation in Sebeos 1999; see also Grossmann 2002: 39-40. During the earlier Sassanian attacks against Egypt in 617-619, no disturbance seems to have had occurred either; for the Sassanian and Islamic incursions into Byzantine territories, see Hodges & Whitehouse 1983:

By the early eighth century the major urban centre of South Sinai, Pharan, had deteriorated and was eventually abandoned.[541] The local bishopric was transferred to Horeb (section 3.4). Only the small settlement at Raithō remained in the wider area.[542] As urban populations diminished and the economy reverted to nomadism, the imperial foundation of the Monastery gradually assumed an additional role as the strongest agent of power south of the Clysma (Suez) - Aila (Aqaba) line, a role it maintained until the twentieth century. Two references to a mid-tenth-century (or possibly earlier) attack by 'Saracens' causing three hundred monks from Horeb and Raithō to seek refuge in Mount Latros in Asia Minor testify not only to continued insecurity caused by Bedouin aggression but also to considerable numbers of ecclesiastics, numerous enough to withstand emigration.[543]

Although some revenue was left by pilgrims (section 4.1.1), times were often hard and stories of famine must be connected with difficulties in supplying the distant mountain with grain. The following tradition is attested since the medieval period:[544]

54-5, 60-1, 68-9; see also Mayerson 1964: 190-1; El Cheikh 2004: 25.

[541] Kamil 1991: 25; Grossmann 2002: 41-2.

[542] The site of the Monastery at Wādī al-Ṭūr in Raithō continued to be used throughout the early Islamic period; see Kawatoko 1995: 53-9; Kawatoko 1996: 67-77.

[543] Baronius 1869: 91; *Vita Pauli* 1892: 33; Eckenstein 1921: 138.

[544] Quote from Meinardus 1970: 253-4 note 2. See also Meistermann 1909: 142-3; Champdor 1963: 49; Kamil 1991: 71-2; Dansette 2001: 68-9. The story was mentioned by 'Abu'l-Makārim' in the late twelfth or the early thirteenth century (section 3.1.5; Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006: 36-7) and by many pilgrims, often with additions or changes. For the thirteenth and the fourteenth century, see Thietmarus 1857: 46-7; Thietmar 1936: 60-6; Jacopo 1950: 74-5; Frescobaldi *et al.* 1948: 60-1 (for Frescobaldi), 114-6 (for Gucci), 200-1 (for Sigoli); Martoni 1895: 608; Anglure 1878: 49. There were several more references in later centuries. The story was also mentioned in Nektarios' *Epitome* in the mid-seventeenth century (section 4.3.3); see Nektarios 1980: 201-4. In N. da Poggibonsi's 1349 account both the Virgin Mary and Saint Catherine were mentioned; see Poggibonsi 1881: 146-9; Poggibonsi 1945: 129-30. Another version replaced the Virgin Mary with Saint Catherine, Hagia Koryphē with Cairo and connected the founding of the Monastery with the incident; see Tafur 1874: 92-3; Tafur 1926: 82; Tafur 1934: 70-1. In J. Coppin's version (1640s) the monks did not ascend from the Monastery of Saint Catherine but descended from another monastery at Prophētēs Hēlias; see Coppin 1971: 269.

> 'The monks, [...] terribly plagued with vermin, determined to leave the monastery. Moreover, they had suffered from lack of food. So they ascended the holy mountain with the intention to desert their holy places [...]. On their way, however, the Holy Virgin appear[e]d to them, promising to them to deliver them from their tormentors. She ordered the monks to return, and when they arrived at the monastery, they found one hundred camels laden with provisions waiting for them.'

Similar stories survive from desert monasteries in Egypt and Syria and probably derived from a *topos*, a standard formula.[545] The spot where the Virgin Mary appeared to the monks is marked to this day by the chapel of Panagia tou Oikonomou ('Virgin of the Steward,' marked in figure 7 as 'Ch. of Holy Virgin' near the 'Gate of St Stephen,' section 1.5.3), half way up the stepped path to Hagia Koryphē (route A).[546] The summit continued to perform a protective role for the desert fathers: their ascent there would only guarantee them divine protection and surely no means of subsistence.

4.1.1. Itinerant monks and indomitable pilgrims

In his thirty-eighth narration Anastasios told the story of eight hundred Armenian pilgrims, noting that people of this nation frequently travel to Sinai (on Anastasios and this group of Armenians, see section 2.4.6).[547] They witnessed their fellow travellers and their own walking sticks go up in flames for an hour without getting hurt. Anastasios then added that 'the Saracens'

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[545] Meinardus 1970: 253-5; Dansette 2001: 69.
[546] *Egeria* 2008: 83, 89-90.
[547] Stone 1982b: 28. Michael E. Stone (1982a: 32) argued that the Armenian presence within the anchoretic / monastic community was not significant in size, however a *diakonētēs* was mentioned by Anastasios (section 2.4.6, **text XXX**). Furthermore, an 'Armenian monastery' (probably a group of monks or anchorites within the existing Monastery) was mentioned in a late seventh-early eighth-century Armenian text; see Anastase 1884: 398. Additional sources refer to Armenians resident in the Monastery; see Stone 1982a: 30-2.

mocked this miracle because such phenomena did not appear 'in the synagogues of the Jews or the Arabs.'[548] By the term 'synagogues of the Arabs' he probably referred to mosques, with which he must have been familiar at the time of writing (mid-seventh century). However, the establishment of Muslim rule and worship seems to have done nothing to curb the pilgrimage zeal of the Armenians. They obviously travelled without much fear of attacks, although the size of their group may indicate an effort to seek safety in numbers.[549]

There are many Armenian inscriptions along the pilgrim routes towards Horeb, especially at Wādī Haggag, along the Aila to Horeb route (on pilgrim routes, see section 4.2).[550] More than thirty inscriptions carved by pilgrims have been discovered on Hagia Koryphē (figure 66), along the stepped pathway to it (route A), around Wādī al-Lajā' to the west of Horeb and on the Justinianic doors of the Monastery *katholikon* (section 3.2).[551] They are names of individuals (clergymen, laymen, a guide and a lady are mentioned) and invocations to *nomina sacra*.[552] Most of these inscriptions, datable on palaeographic evidence, seem to have been carved during the first millennium, between the seventh and the tenth century.[553] Anastasios and the epigraphic evidence testify to a trail of Armenian pilgrims throughout the early Islamic period.[554]

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[548] Anastase 1902a: 81-2. The Greek word *synagōgē* (congregation place) describes the function of a mosque with accuracy.
[549] Stone 1982a: 35.
[550] Stone 1982a: 36-52; Stone 1982b: 28-31; Mayerson 1982: 44-57; Mayerson 1994: 239.
[551] Stone 1982a: 5-6, 22-3; Stone 1982b: 28.
[552] Stone 1982a: 65-86; for a 1463 inscription, see Stone 1982a: 9, 67-8. An additional inscription may date from the second half of the fourteenth or the first half of the fifteenth century.
[553] Stone 1982a: 16. The banning of pilgrimage to (Chalcedonian) Palestine by a Monophysite Armenian synod (Synod of Dvin, 536) testifies to an established Holy Land pilgrimage tradition in Armenia since the early sixth century; see Maraval 1985: 75, 75 note 58.
[554] Ševčenko 1966: 258; Stone 1982b: 30-1; Talbot 2008: 39.

A similar pattern must apply to pilgrims and peripatetic monks of different origin who have not been as well studied as the Armenians.[555] Among the monks practicing monastery-hopping in search for illumination, two martyrs who were killed by Muslim authorities after refusing conversion may be mentioned.[556] Pachōmios, 'a cousin of the caliph' (therefore a Muslim Arab by birth) in the first half of the eighth century,[557] and Qays ibn Rabīᶜ ibn Yazīd al-Ghassānī, a Muslim convert originating from an Arab Christian family and living in the mid-ninth century, converted (in the case of Qays, converted back) to Christianity, spent time in the Sinai Monastery and eventually met a martyr's end when they professed their faith while travelling in Palestine and Syria.[558]

Both monks were remarkably mobile. Qays converted back to Christianity in Baalbek, then visited the patriarch in Jerusalem, became a monk in Mar Sabba in Palestine where he stayed for five years, toured the monasteries around Jerusalem, went to Horeb for another five years (he was made steward, *oikonomos*, there), travelled to al-Ramla in Palestine, returned for seven years (where he rose to become superior, *dikaios* or *hēgoumenos*) and was eventually killed in al-Ramla around 860.[559] Pachōmios, having become a Sinai monk, was reported as having been martyred after anathematising 'the religion of the Saracens' before the caliph, supposedly in Damascus. Both Qays and Pachōmios

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[555] On Georgians visiting Sinai from the fifth to the fourteenth century, see Stone 1982b: 31.
[556] The several Arabic manuscripts preserved in the Monastery library are theological and ecclesiastical and must have travelled in the baggage of such itinerant monks. Their scriptoria were in Damascus, Mar Sabba, monasteries of the Jordan desert, Clysma (present-day Suez), Cairo and Raithō; see Meimarēs 1985: 11, 66-7.
[557] Swanson 2001: 116-7, 116-7 note 42, 126.
[558] On Qays, see Swanson 2001: 109-15; Ratliff 2008: 16.

moved freely between the numerous monasteries, churches and pilgrimage sites of Syria, Palestine and Sinai but did not visit Egypt, probably because it was Monophysite territory. They found themselves in danger only when travelling outside the Horeb area, which seems to have been too distant and safely under the monks' control to present a threat from Muslims to Christian converts.

On Hagia Koryphē proper, two inscriptions in Greek have been recorded near the Armenian ones on the face of cave A (figures 66 and 67):[560]

> 'God of the holy Moses / remember Kosmas and / his children / Timokratēs Sergios and Constantia. / Amen.' (**Text XLIX**)

> '+ God of the holy Moses / remember your servant / [---]mios deacon / and *paramonarios* / the writer +' (**Text L**)

Although no dates have been suggested for these inscriptions on the basis of their palaeography, they must have been carved during the first millennium and most probably after the sixth century. The first one may record a pilgrim's visit whereas the second one commemorates a *paramonarios*, overseer, a monastic title which is known from sources to have been associated with the summit and its basilica (sections 2.4.6 and 3.1.3) and probably continued to be in existence into the late medieval period as two monks are mentioned as 'continually dwelling' on Hagia Koryphē by F. Fabri in 1483 (section 3.3.1 and **text XLIII**). Both inscriptions are full of spelling mistakes[561] and appeal to 'God of the holy Moses,' a typically Sinaitic invocation which refers to the person closer to Hagia Koryphē.

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[559] His bones were divided between the Sinai Monastery and the Church of Saint Kyriakos at al-Ramla; see Swanson 2001: 113.
[560] Author's translation.
[561] Ševčenko 1966: 257.

These inscriptions add to the volume of evidence for the continuity of Sinaitic monastic life during the early Islamic period. Christian communities within Muslim lands were isolated from the life of the Church in Byzantium and the 'Latin' West. This isolation was made manifest in the absence of iconoclastic tribulations in Sinai or elsewhere.[562] Although they remained far from the latest theological controversies, eastern monasteries gathered significant numbers of monks and anchorites within and around them. The decoration of two marble panels in the *katholikon's* sanctuary with encaustic scenes a few decades after the Muslim conquest testifies to the continuation of artistic activity as well. The painter probably originated from Palestine.[563]

By the mid-ninth century, Horeb was important enough to attract a certain Fromont (or Frotmond or Frotomundo) and his anonymous brother from Rennes who, instructed by the bishops of king Lothair II of Lotharingia (835-869, ruled 855-869), travelled to Rome, Jerusalem and Sinai seeking penitence for a murder. They had to remain chained to each other for the duration of their expedition and spent three years on Horeb before returning to Rome and Rennes.[564] The Latin narration of their adventures, written by a monk in Redon (Brittany), contains no reference to difficulties encountered in their journeys apart from the chains they carried.[565]

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[562] El Cheikh 2004: 119.
[563] Weitzmann 1980: 86-7; Weitzmann 1982c: 63-80, 93.
[564] Anonymous 1680: 220.
[565] Eckenstein 1921: 136-7; Labib 1961: 23-4; Skrobucha 1966: 68; Hobbs 1995: 224-5. Balthasar de Monconys in 1647 and W. Daniel in 1701 were told that the brothers were the sons of an Ethiopian king; see Monconys 1973: 99-100; Pitts *et al.* 1949: 80. According to Nektarios' *Epitome* (section 4.3.3) their nationality and origins were unknown; see Nektarios 1980: 212-3.

Material excavated in Hagia Koryphē and datable from between the seventh and the eleventh century is sparse. No building activity could be documented, since the erection of the 1934 chapel of Hagia Triada obliterated all signs of buildings postdating the Justinianic basilica. Small finds included fragments of glass vessels (mostly oil lamps, some of the early, undecorated 'mosque lamp' type, eighth to twelfth century) and a little utilitarian pottery (amphorae and table wares).[566] A few green-glazed medium-size vessels, possibly jarlets or jugs (figure 68), were also found and they are attributable to the Umayyad and early ᶜAbbāsid periods (seventh and eighth century). Finally, some unglazed clay oil lamp fragments can be dated between the eighth and the tenth century (figure 69, sherds 7, 9 and 10).[567] The range of pottery shapes testifies to the non-residential character of the site, with the modest number of larger vessels equalling the number of lamps. The former were probably used by the *paramonarioi* of the summit whereas the latter were also carried by occasional visitors.

4.1.2. The conversion of the laymen to Islam

An anonymous text collated at the end of Anastasios' *Narrations* (sections 2.4.6. and 3.1.3) described how the lay population of Horeb was converted to Islam:[568]

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[566] Panayotidi & Kalopissi-Verti 2007: no pagination; based on research by Dr Charikleia Diamanti and Ms Maria Skordara.
[567] The glazed vessels and lamps were researched by the author.
[568] Author's translation; see also Eckenstein 1921: 135-6; Murray 1935: 266; *Perigraphē* 1978: 113; Chitty 1995: 176; Hobbs 1995: 158-9. Peter Grossmann (2002: 40-1, 41 note 80) thought that the passage referred to the conversion of the Pharan area population to Islam and that the summit referred to was not Hagia Koryphē but a mountain near that oasis. This identification is unjustified since the term '*hagia koryphē*' is exclusively used for the Horeb summit in all texts. Grossmann went on to suggest that Philip Mayerson did not examine this passage in his 1964 article, yet it was discussed in Mayerson 1964: 197.

> 'When according to God's fair judgment the nation of Saracens came upon the holy mountain of Sinai, to conquer the place and to make the preexisting Saracens that were previously Christian renounce their faith in Christ, and when [the local Saracens] living nearby and having their tents close to the fortress of Pharan and [the fortress] of the holy bush heard of that, they ascended with their families up to Hagia Koryphē as if it is a fortified place from where to wage war from an elevated spot upon the coming Saracens, which they did; but being too weak to resist for long the multitude of invaders, they surrendered to save themselves; and to join in their belief.' **(Text LI)**

The author then went on telling the story of a Bedouin who refused to follow the others and, out of his fervent faith, chose to jump off a cliff rather than be converted. His wife ran after him and implored him to kill her and their children before committing suicide, so that he would spare them the sin of denying their faith. The writer was careful to mention that she addressed her husband in Arabic. Her wish was granted and the husband slaughtered his family before jumping off the southern side of the summit, which is indeed the steepest one.

The passage gives interesting insights into an otherwise obscure period. Firstly, no distinction was made between the locals and their Muslim attackers. They were both called 'Saracens' and used Arabic. It is possible that the aggressors were not actually invaders from outside Sinai but recently Islamicised locals. Secondly, conversion to Islam was forced upon the laymen but not the ecclesiastics. The life of the anchoretic community obviously continued uninterrupted. Thirdly, when the local population had to defend itself against the invaders, the protection offered by Hagia Koryphē was preferred to that of the fortresses.[569]

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[569] Philip Mayerson suggested that the 'Pharan' fortress was actually a misnomer for the *phylaktērion*; see Mayerson 1964: 197. However, there is no reason why such a transfer of a place name should have happened.

It was the metaphysical protection emanating from Hagia Koryphē rather than its defensive qualities that informed the defenders' choice, although a supply of water and its inaccessible location added to its attraction (sections 2.5 and 3.3). The spot from which the faithful Bedouin jumped was probably on the side of the summit further away from the point of ascent of the attackers. If his suicide occurred to the south, indeed the southeast which is very steep, the ascent must have taken place from the northwest, which is the easiest slope to climb, or the northeast, which is to this day the top of the stepped route from Prophētēs Hēlias.

The date of the event remained unstated in the anonymous account but it was given in a passage from the work of Eutychios (sections 2.2, 2.2.1 and 3.1.2):[570]

> 'As time went by, these slaves had numerous children and proliferated, and, as in the meantime Islam reached its widest expansion during the caliphate of ᶜAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān, they attacked and killed one another. Some were killed, others escaped and several have remained Muslims until today and are called Banu Ṣaleh. They are known to this day as 'Children of the Monastery.' From these the Lakhmids also originated. As the slaves converted to Islam and were scattered, the monks destroyed their dwellings, so that nobody would dwell in them anymore. The ruins are preserved to this day.'[571]

The event was placed during ᶜAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān's rule (646-705, ruled 686-705).[572] It was also made clear from Eutychios' text that the 'invaders' were local converted Arabs rather than outsiders.

The destruction of their abodes and probably of the *phylaktērion*, too, was securely dated after the conversion in the early years of the eighth century,

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[570] Translation by Christos Bitzis-Politis from the German translation in Eutychios 1985: 90 (the corresponding volume with the Arabic text has not yet been located). As in all quotes, the transliteration of the Arabic names by the original editor has been preserved. On the text, see Eckenstein 1921: 135.
[571] Eutychios' text was quoted in 'Abu'l-Makārim's' description of the Monastery; see section 3.1.5.
[572] Philip Mayerson dated the event between 684 and 685 without justifying the dates; see Mayerson 1964: 197.

a dating in accordance with the excavation results which are very poor in Islamic pottery (in comparison with Hagia Koryphē). The reasons for this demolition must have been the anchoretic community's *hēsychia* (stillness, silence, peace[573]) and safety, which would have been compromised by a population unchecked by religious respect. However, the reservation expressed by Andrei Popescu-Belis about such an act of violence on behalf of monks is justified and natural forces could have accelerated destruction,[574] for example a rock fall testified by the large boulders scattered around. The dispersal of the population was probably limited and most remained in the vicinity, eventually becoming the Jabāliyya tribe of 'monastery servants' (section 2.1.1).[575]

The reasons for inflicting such a violent conversion upon a peaceful and isolated population remain unstated in the two texts. The Islamisation of Palestine and Egypt was slow and it only reached the level of mass conversion between the ninth and the tenth century.[576] It is true that during the rule of ᶜAbd al-Malik the Arabisation of the Umayyad caliphate, which until then preserved several Byzantine elements in administration and economy, accelerated.[577] But forced conversion was forbidden by Islamic law and exceptions to this rule were rare.[578] It is probable that a small-range event, for example a local dispute between Bedouin tribes, generated this violent outcome. Once more, Hagia Koryphē

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[573] On *hēsychia*, see Hobbs 1995: 94.
[574] Popescu-Belis 2000: 379, 385-6.
[575] Popescu-Belis 2000: 382-4.
[576] Décobert 1992: 279-80; Levy-Rubin 2000: 261-5.
[577] Eddé *et al.* 1997: 36, 150 ; El Cheikh 2004: 55.
[578] For example, the forced conversion of 5,000 men of the Christian tribe of Banū Tanukh near Aleppo in the time of the ᶜAbbāsid caliph al-Mahdī (ruled 775-785); see Eddé *et al.* 1997: 69;

performed its traditional role as a site of physical prominence and remoteness which offered supernatural protection to those beseeching it.

4.1.3. The destruction of the Hagia Koryphē basilica

At the time of the conversion of the laymen to Islam *circa* 700 the terraces supporting the Justinianic basilica complex on Hagia Koryphē were still in place and this served to justify the use of the term 'fortified' by the anonymous author of the narration. More than three centuries later, in the Fāṭimid period, three 'oratories' were erected on Horeb and one of them must have been a mosque at Hagia Koryphē, in all probability built with reused granite blocks from the ruins of the basilica.[579] These are the two *termina* for the basilica's destruction which must have happened sometime between the early eighth and the eleventh century.

The cause of the collapse could provide clues as to a more precise date of the incident. Human agency seems improbable, not only because the site enjoyed the protection of the monks but also because it commanded the respect of the Muslim faithful. There are no contemporary references to violent demolitions of Christian edifices in the Sinai Peninsula and it seems that during the seventh and the eighth century the iconoclastic rage was stronger within Byzantium than within the caliphate. Even more significant is the negative evidence of Greek written sources which mention no such calamity befalling the holy summit.[580] The effort involved

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Levy-Rubin 2000: 268. For other examples, see Swanson 2001: 124, 124 note 75.

[579] The oratories were mentioned in an inscription on a *kursi* preserved at the Monastery of Saint Catherine (section 4.2.1).

[580] C. Sicard noted during a 1722 visit that the building had been destroyed 'by the Turks;' see Prefetto 1810: 242-3; Prefetto 1812: 283. This view was adopted by some scholars but without any

in such an undertaking would have been considerable and would have merited a reference in the remarkably thorough monastic tradition.

Natural causes seem to be the best explanation for the destruction of the basilica. Although thunderstorms rage violently on the summit (section 2.4.6) and a fire could easily consume the timber roof of the building causing its gradual ruin, a collapse due to earthquake agrees better with the archaeological evidence. The wall supporting the apse of the modern chapel and part of the apse itself were part of the original basilica apse and they stand safely in place, being founded on the granite bedrock. On the contrary, the eastern end of the southern aisle and the northeastern corner of the basilica and narthex have entirely disappeared because they were founded on terraces filled with earth. The dislocation of a few blocks from the retaining walls of the terraces would be enough to bring down the entire complex. Furthermore, no traces of an ash layer which would support a destructive fire hypothesis have been found.

Several tremors in the area could have caused the collapse and their dates have been recorded in sources and verified by scientific means. Research so far has focused on Palestine, an area affected by the Dead Sea Transform, the boundary between the African-Sinai and Arabian tectonic plates. The rift extends as far south as Aqaba, a major epicentre of seismic activity fairly close to Horeb.[581] The earthquake of 18 January 746 (at about 11 am) exceeded grade 9 in the Modified Mercalli intensity scale (ruinous earthquake), resulting in large buildings shifting

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justification; see Amantos 1953: 17.

[581] For epicentral locations and active volcanoes, see Degg 1990: 301, figure 5; for seismic activity, see Nur & Ron 1996: 75-6, figure 2.

off their foundations and partially or wholly collapsing. Its epicentre was around Lake Tiberias in present-day Israel. Strong earthquakes (grades 7 to 8, very strong to destructive, causing slight to considerable damage to well-built structures) were recorded in 16 January 738, 8 March 756, in 808 and in December 856 or later.[582]

The earliest reference to an earthquake destruction of the basilical complex appears almost a millennium later, in the account of Balthasar de Monconys' travel to Sinai (French, 1608-1665, at the Monastery 26 April-2 May 1647). When on Hagia Koryphē on the 29th of April, he noted:[583]

> 'There was once on this mountain a beautiful church that was demolished due to a trembling of the earth: they say that God let this happen because the Turks wanted to seize it to make a mosque and wishing to move some stones from the ruins, great flames gushed forth from under the earth.' **(Text LII)**

It is probable that the tradition that Monconys recorded alluded to the cause of the catastrophe (earthquake) but also to its date (sometime during the early years of Muslim infiltration into the religious life of Horeb). Therefore, an eighth-century date (perhaps 746) could be tentatively suggested as the time of the disastrous event.

4.1.4. Saint Catherine

Soon after the collapse of the Hagia Koryphē basilica, a new figure came to be added to the Sinaitic pantheon alongside Moses and Elijah. Saint Catherine was little-known before the discovery (*inventio*) of her body, miraculously transported from her place of martyrdom in Alexandria to the summit of Hagia Aikaterinē.

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[582] The December 856 earthquake was extremely violent and extended from Iran to Yemen and Egypt; see Ambraseys 1962: 78. See also Amiran 1950-1: 226-7; Amiran 1952: 49-51; Russell 1985: 39, 46-9. The 746 earthquake appears at the database of the National Geophysical Data Center, U.S.A., www.ngdc.noaa.gov.

However, her prestige expanded all over the Christian world and the Monastery embraced her followers and assumed her name.

Catherine supposedly lived in Alexandria during the rule of the emperor Gaius Valerius Galerius Maximinus (*circa* 270-313, ruled 308-313).[584] She was a young woman of noble birth, indeed of royal descent, great beauty and strong intellect but had vowed to remain chaste rather than follow the prescribed path of marriage. When Maximinus organised sacrifices to pagan gods, Catherine protested publicly.[585] Embarrassed by his inability to counter her learned arguments, uttered in obscure rhetorical Greek, the emperor ordered fifty philosophers to attempt it. They failed, were converted to Christianity by the virgin's words and paid with their lives. Maximinus had the girl tortured on a device of wheels with attached knives but angelic intervention destroyed the contraption encouraging further conversions (and subsequent executions). Catherine finally met a martyr's death by decapitation. Out of her severed neck flowed milk rather than blood. Her body was transferred by angels to the summit of Mount Sinai.[586]

The Saint appeared in various texts from the seventh century onwards and in tenth-century Byzantine wall painting cycles in Cappadocia and Greece.[587] She gained popularity later in the tenth century, mainly thanks to the story of her life

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[583] Author's translation. On Monconys, see Eckenstein 1921: 178; Labib 1961: 95-7.
[584] Jill Kamil (1991: 22-3) referred to the emperor incorrectly as 'Maximanus.'
[585] It is unlikely that the emperor involved was Maxentius as mentioned in Symeon Metaphrastes' *vita* of the Saint (Symeon 1864b: 276) and repeated in Christine Walsh's work on Saint Catherine (Walsh 2007: 7, 7 note 2). Maxentius ruled in Rome whereas Maximinus was *caesar* of Egypt and Syria after 305. See also Labib 1961: 24-5, 24 note 2. The synopsis of Saint Catherine's life and martyrdom given here is based on the Greek text of Symeon 1864b: 275-302.
[586] Walsh 2007: 7-8.
[587] Walsh 2007: 24-7; 34-8.

(*vita*) written by Symeon Metaphrastes.[588] The desire for a relic embodying her grace must have proved irresistible and was soon met by the monks of South Sinai.

The exact date of her body's 'discovery' is not known and various moments during the eighth, the ninth and the tenth century have been proposed.[589] The traditional date of *circa* 800 is not supported by evidence.[590] The lack of any reference to the Saint in Eutychios' detailed work (early tenth century) suggests a late tenth-century date for the *inventio*, contemporary to Symeon's work.[591] At about the same time, Egypt fell in the hands of the Fāṭimids and a new capital, Cairo, was founded in 969. The patronage of members of the Fāṭimid elite (section 4.2.1), the arrival of the Crusaders in the late eleventh century and the popularity of Saint Catherine's relic in the 'Latin' West would define the life of the monastic community on Horeb in the second millennium.

It is believed that in the late twelfth or the early thirteenth century the Saint's body was translated from the summit of 'Mount Sinai' to the *katholikon* within the walls of the Monastery.[592] A letter by Philippe de Milly (1120-1171), Lord of Nablus (1138/1144-1161) and Transjordan (after 1161) and later Grand Master of the Templars (1169-1171), records a pilgrimage to Sinai in the 1160s and an ascent to the mountain to retrieve a piece of the relic.[593] His visit provides a *terminus post quem* for the translation, which had happened by 1217, when the German magister

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[588] Symeon 1864b: 276-302. On the *vita*, see Eckenstein 1921: 138-9; Walsh 2007: 28-9.
[589] Kamil 1991: 23 (ninth century); Wolff 2003: 209 (mid-ninth century); Lewis 2006: 115 (late tenth century); *Egeria* 2008: 81-3 (ninth century).
[590] Walsh 2007: 40.
[591] Walsh 2007: 41.
[592] Kamil 1991: 24; Walsh 2007: 40, 44. The body was still on the summit in 1096 according to Hugh of Flavigny's *Chronicon*; see Hugo 1881: 252-3; Skrobucha 1966: 74; Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006: 38.

(master, teacher) Thietmar visited Saint Catherine's sepulchre in the *katholikon*.[594] A date near the time of the 'Latin' conquest of Constantinople by the armies of the Fourth Crusade (1204) is very probable. A chapel was erected on the summit of Hagia Aikaterinē and several others replaced it in following centuries.[595]

Although the adoption of Catherine's name as the Monastery's dedication has been dated to the tenth or the eleventh century,[596] a thirteenth- or fourteenth-century date seems more plausible.[597] An icon attributed to a thirteenth-century Sinai painter and preserved at the Monastery depicts the Virgin Mary (the Monastery's former patron) holding Jesus with Moses at her feet and Saint Catherine (the new patron) to her right (figure 70).[598] This small devotional icon eloquently illustrates the transition from one virgin protectress to the other. The Greek name of the Monastery, used to this day, can be translated as 'The Holy Monastery of the God-trodden Mount Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery,' preserving an Hagia Koryphē reference and almost adding the Saint Catherine dedication as an afterthought.

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[593] Walsh 2007: 44, 44 note 29. On P. de Milly, see Barber 2003: 60-78.
[594] Thietmarus 1857: 42-3; Thietmar 1936: 44-54. On magister Thietmar, see section 4.2.2.
[595] Walsh 2007: 40. Gabriele Capodilista from Padova and Santo Brasca (1444-1522), a Milanese courtier of the Sforzas, mentioned one such chapel in 1458 and 1480 respectively (probably the latter was copying the former); see Capodilista 1966: 231; Brasca 1966: 139. A chapel was also mentioned by a mid-sixteenth-century pilgrim (Luke 1927: 58), by J. Palerne in 1581 (Palerne 1991: 152-3, five by three *pas* in size, approximately 3.1x1.86 m) and by later visitors. A 1721 chapel is mentioned in Kamil 1991: 32, probably after evidence by C. Sicard (1722 visit); see Prefetto 1810: 249-50; Prefetto 1812: 291-3.
[596] Kamil 1991: 24; Dahari 2000: 2.
[597] Dansette 2001: 73-4; Walsh 2007: 42. The dedication to the Virgin Mary was mentioned in a pilgrim account for the last time in 1486 by Georges Lengherand; see Labib 1961: 55. The dedication to Saint Catherine was first mentioned in an official document during the early fourteenth century; see Skrobucha 1966: 65.
[598] *Egeria* 2008: 270-1.

An interesting point in the story of Saint Catherine's relic for the purposes of this thesis is the transfer of its *inventio* location from 'Mount Sinai' (as it appears in hagiographical tradition, supposedly Hagia Koryphē) to Hagia Aikaterinē, where the imprint of her body is a focus of pilgrimage to this day. In the eleventh-century Latin *Translation and Miracles of Saint Catherine, Virgin and Martyr* her point of rest was clearly stated as Hagia Koryphē:[599]

> '... God transferred her in the hands of angels and had her deposited on the mountain where He once gave to his attendant Moses the stone tablets inscribed with the Law.' **(Text LIII)**

Symeon Metaphrastes' tenth-century *vita* was not specific and only mentioned 'Mount Sinai,' without using the dedicated Greek name of 'Hagia Koryphē,'[600] although this is an *argumentum ex silentio*. The description of the Monastery and its environs by 'Abu'l-Makārim' in the late twelfth or the early thirteenth century (section 3.1.5) located the discovery at Hagia Aikaterinē.[601] Therefore, it is not clear from the textual record on which summit the body was exposed to pilgrims' devotions between its tenth-century discovery and its translation.

However, there is no reason to doubt the monastic tradition which separates the two summits and assigns the *inventio* to Hagia Aikaterinē.[602] It seems that the hagiographical tradition referred to 'Mount Sinai' (the 'Mount of the Law') and this was literally interpreted in 'Latin' versions as the Hagia Koryphē summit.[603] But when Saint Catherine's deposition point had to be localised in the tenth

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[599] Author's translation. Later sources repeat this identification; see Michelant & Raynaud 1882: 63.
[600] Symeon 1864b: 301.
[601] Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006: 38.
[602] Lina Echenstein's view (1921: 140) that 'the body of the saint at this time lay enshrined on a mountain which was probably the Gebel Musa itself' should be revisited.

century by the Sinai brethren, it was placed away from Hagia Koryphē, which was already charged with strong Old Testament associations and had been frequented for centuries (therefore could not have hidden such a hallowed relic).

Soon after its discovery, Catherine's body was dismembered and most of its pieces were taken to Christian states all over the East and the West (France, England, Spain, Italy, the Holy Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, Georgia), where shrines to the virgin Saint were created and gained popularity.[604] The most important shrine was at the Abbey of the Trinity at Rouen in France, housing three of her fingers which arrived in the 1020s / 1030s with the Syracuse-born Sinai monk Symeon Pentaglossos (the 'five-tongued,' fluent in five languages – a different Symeon had written the Saint's *vita* a few decades earlier).[605] The fingers had detached themselves while Symeon was collecting in a glass vial the fragrant oil which oozed miraculously from the body at its mountaintop shrine.[606] In 1229 Louis IX, king of France (1214-1270, ruled 1226-1270), erected a church dedicated to the Saint in Paris, marking her peak of fame.[607]

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[603] Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006: 38. For an extended version of the Saint's *inventio* in a fifteenth-century pilgrim account, see Fabri 1897: 604-6.
[604] Kamil 1991: 28-9; Wolff 2003: 218-9. F. Fabri was told of a hand preserved in Georgia or Rhodes; see Fabri 1897: 601. K. Harant in 1598 was told that the other hand had been stolen and taken to Persia but because of the misfortunes that befell those who took it, it was returned; see Harant 1608: 104; Harant 1855: 86; Harant 1972: 136.
[605] The abba Evervinus Trevirensis wrote a book on Symeon Pentaglossos, the son of a Greek father and a Calabrian mother who was educated in Constantinople; see Mabillon 1707: 341-3. For a Latin narration of Symeon Pentaglossos' travels and of the Saint's miracles, see *Translatio* 1903: 423-38. See also Eckenstein 1921: 139; Amantos 1953: 30, 34; Skrobucha 1966: 68-73; Kamil 1991: 23 [she dated Symeon Pentaglossos to the thirteenth century, confusing him with Symeon, bishop of the Monastery from 1203, author of the Monastery's *typikon* ('liturgical order') and a traveller to Venice in the early thirteenth century in order to defend the Sinaitic priories in Venetian lands; see Stern 1964b: 22; Ratliff 2008: 17 note 13]; Lewis 2006: 115.
[606] Mabillon 1707: 342; Hugo 1881: 252-3; Eckenstein 1921: 140-1; Labib 1961: 29.
[607] Kamil 1991: 24.

The spread of Catherine's popularity was both wide and fast. She was popular with royalty thanks to her lineage,[608] with women and young girls thanks to her strong will and commitment to virginity, with scholars, students and learned clerics thanks to her education and intellect. She was the patron saint of any profession related with wheels (millers, cart wrights, turners and potters). Finally, she was held worthy of three haloes, a white one for virginity, a green one or learning and a red one for martyrdom.[609] Her numerous admirers flocked to her European shrines but longed to visit the original one. Simone Sigoli, a Florentine lord who visited Sinai in 28/29 October - 2 November 1384, was ecstatic while describing the 'freshness' of her skull:[610]

> 'And here they have the head and two bones, and truly the relic of the head of St. Catherine is very devout to look upon, for you see all the head from the neck upwards, and it is not covered by any silver ornament: so you can clearly see it with the scalp fresh, as if it were of late, and continually by the grace of God the said head emits manna.' **(Text LIV)**

When Johannes Witte de Hese from Utrecht narrated a (probably fictitious) pilgrimage to Sinai in 1489, he focused on the Saint's bones, the oil that oozed from them, her blessing but forgot to even mention Hagia Koryphē and the tradition of the Decalogue.[611] A Flemish pilgrim (probably a Franciscan priest) who actually travelled to Sinai in late 1481, Jean Aerts, devoted four pages to his Monastery visit but again failed to mention Hagia Koryphē.[612] Religious fashion

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[608] Legends even connected her ancestry to the kings of Britain and to Roman emperors; see Eckenstein 1921: 161-2.
[609] Skrobucha 1966: 65; Wolff 2000: 35.
[610] English translation by Theophilus Bellorini and Eugene Hoade in Frescobaldi *et al.* 1948: 196-7.
[611] Hese 1870: 181. On J. W. de Hese, see Saint-Génois 1846: volume I, 36-7; Eckenstein 1921: 167 note 2, 168.
[612] Aerts 1873: 563-6. On Jean Aerts, see Saint-Génois 1846: volume II, 205; Eckenstein 1921: 168.

had experienced an ephemeral turn and the virgin Saint from Alexandria had eclipsed the 'Mount of the Law' in the eyes of the faithful.

4.2. The Age of Pilgrimage

Most of the sources on Horeb from the eleventh to the sixteenth century were narratives of pilgrimage performed by 'Latin' Christians from West and Central Europe. Although the movement of eastern clergymen and pilgrims continued and links with Byzantium remained strong,[613] it was the intensification of western pilgrimage after the creation of Crusader states in Syria and Palestine from 1098 that set these centuries apart. The cultural and religious bond with these Christian principalities (rather than the supposed safety they offered) encouraged pious travellers to make their way east in search of blessings, exculpation and glory.[614]

Even before the Crusades the interest in Holy Land sites had been revived in Europe through 'replication shrines.' These were either sacred buildings miraculously translated stone by stone to a new location or exact copies built by angels closer to home. The oldest 'replication shrine' was the Holy House of Our Lady of Walsingham, founded in 1061 after visions urged the Saxon noblewoman Richeldis de Faverches to rebuild the house of the Annunciation of the Virgin in Nazareth. Since she was unable to make up her mind as to the location, angels undertook the task and produced an exact copy of the house overnight.[615]

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[613] For active contacts of the Monastery with Byzantium, see Tōmadakēs 1990: 16; Amantos 1953: 42-3; Sōtēriou & Sōtēriou 1958: 9.
[614] Kraack 2001: 87-9.
[615] On 'replication shrines,' see Turner & Turner 1978: 175-80, 233. A similar story marked the end of the Crusader period, when in 1291 (after the fall of Acre) angels transported the actual

Such miraculous events stoked the desire to possess the (original) Holy Land landmarks. Beyond secular and papal politics, this desire was the main driving force behind the popular support for the Crusades. Very soon pilgrims followed the soldiers. In Victor Turner's words:[616]

> 'In the High Middle Ages, pilgrimage to national and international shrines was, pragmatically, as much a pillar of Christendom as the hajj was, theologically, for Islam. [...] Protected by ecclesiastical and political authorities, pilgrimage became wordly and fashionable.'

Pilgrimage was predominantly an undertaking for wealthy and powerful figures who could afford the expense. Less important people either followed the rich and noble as members of their retinue or managed to make their own way into the Holy Land. The experience was life-changing for all.[617] They roamed the sacred landscapes as if walking in a parallel world, populated not by contemporaries but by Biblical figures and saints.[618] It has been suggested that most fourteenth- and fifteenth-century pilgrims preferred to approach 'Mount Sinai' from Cairo and continue to Jerusalem rather than the other way round because this route was closer to the itinerary of the Exodus.[619] Few took the time for factual descriptions of historical value. Their reluctance to describe, even mention, actual people is indicative of their excited state of perception and must be taken into account when evaluating the information they provide.

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house of the Virgin Mary (not a copy of it) from Nazareth to Tersatto in present-day Croatia, where shepherds discovered it. After a few years the Holy House took off again, this time for Italy, and landed in a wood called Lauretum (thence the name of the shrine today: 'Loreto'). However, it would not stay put and moved a few miles down, to the centre of the town of Recanatti where an impressive basilica celebrates it to this day; see Turner & Turner 1978: 178-80.

[616] Turner & Turner 1978: 187-8, 197.

[617] Many contemporary references reveal less-than-edifying aspects of pilgrimage, summarised by the German proverb: 'Go out a pilgrim, come home a whore;' see Skrobucha 1966: 78; Hobbs 1995: 226.

[618] Deluz 2001: 187.

Saint Catherine, venerated in Horeb since the tenth century (section 4.1.4), was the patroness of pilgrimage.[620] The so-called 'Knights of Saint Catherine' were dedicated to protecting the Holy Land and pilgrims to it. They were associated with the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. Their knighthood was probably a symbolic decoration rather than a membership of an organised order and was available to any successful pilgrim who was prepared to make a generous enough donation.[621] In this, the 'knights' resembled modern pilgrims who proudly wear the silver or gold rings of Saint Catherine with her monogram (on the rings, see also section 5.6).[622]

The Saint's main shrine on Horeb offered the added attraction of unique Old Testament sites like Hagia Koryphē and the Burning Bush.[623] Therefore, it became a popular destination for the most adventurous pilgrims,[624] although it remained within the hold of the Fāṭimid, Ayyūbid and Mamlūk states. Military operations did not reach the South Sinai mountains and the monks were careful to avoid

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[619] Dansette 2001: 67, 68.
[620] Turner & Turner 1978: 175-6.
[621] Giustiniano 1672: 121-3; Meistermann 1909: 122; Eckenstein 1921: 139, 160-1; Zachos 1937: 32-3; Rabino 1938: 65 note 2; Labib 1961: 84-5, plate VIII; Skrobucha 1966: 91-2; Kamil 1991: 28; Dansette 2001: 74-5. On the badge conferred upon successful pilgrims and indicating their 'knighthood,' see Kraack 2001: 93. Membership of the 'Order of Saint Catherine' was particularly costly; see Skrobucha 1966: 92.
[622] There seems to have been a special relationship between relics and rings. This is especially true of Saint Catherine, probably because she was 'a spouse of Christ' who placed a ring on her finger; see Labib 1961: 26. Fifteenth-century pilgrims mentioned touching their jewellery on Saint Catherine's skull; see Fabri 1897: 600-1; Harff 1946: 142. The practice was still alive in the seventeenth century; see Blunt 1953: 68; Morison 1704: 111. P. Della Valle, a wealthy Roman nobleman, purchased and touched no less than 'five hundred [rings] of hippopotamus bone for people of no importance, and a good number made of gold and silver for those of distinction;' see Blunt 1953: 68; Holt 1998: 21. On P. Della Valle, see Holt 1998: 15.
[623] Eddé *et al.* 1997: 100-2.
[624] Their narrations have been studied in detail since the sixteenth century and offer abundant information on Sinaitic life. On the earliest pilgrimage account compilations by S. Feyerabend, M. Crusius, R. Hakluyt and S. Purchas, see section 5.1.

associations with militant Crusader leaders that could upset their Muslim rulers. When Baldwin I (1058?-1118), king of Jerusalem from 1100 to 1118, attempted to visit Sinai in 1115 he was discouraged by the brotherhood.[625] **(Text LV)** A few years earlier, in 1106, Baldwin's main opponent in the battlefield, the Fāṭimid vizier and regent al-Afḍal, had dedicated a *minbar* to the Monastery (section 4.2.1). Baldwin's visit would have been perceived as a provocation by such an important protector and could upset the sensitive balance of Sinaitic politics.

However, less politically dangerous visitors were welcome. Their routes (set since the sixth century) were long and arduous (figure 71).[626] They started from (or ended in) Jerusalem. The first followed the Mediterranean coast of the Sinai Peninsula heading south at Pelusium towards Clysma (present-day Suez) along the western coast. Then, it turned east towards Pharan. The second route continued south from Palestine across the Negev and parallel to the Gulf of Aqaba shore.[627] A third route involved a sea journey to the port of Raithō, a relatively short distance away from Hagia Koryphē. These routes were followed with the aid of Bedouin guides, who often charged extortionate rates or turned against the monks and their visitors.[628] Avaricious provincial officials were an additional threat and frequent petitions to the central government in Cairo testify to both these problems.[629]

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[625] Albertus 1611: 376; Wilken 1813: 402-3; Albericus 1894: 708; Grēgoriadēs 1875: 80; Meistermann 1909: 120; Eckenstein 1921: 147; Daumas 1951: 384; Amantos 1953: 34-5, 43; Labib 1961: 34; Skrobucha 1966: 96; Kamil 1991: 28; Hobbs 1995: 226; Walsh 2007: 44.
[626] Eckenstein 1921: 170-1; Hobbs 1995: 227-31.
[627] Gutwein 1981: 247-8; Grossmann 2002: 31-3.
[628] Deluz 2001: 184-96.
[629] Stern 1964a: 39, 50, 55, 61-2, 67, 72-3, 78-9, 83, 171-4.

The Monastery managed to accommodate not only Muslims but also several Christian sects under an Orthodox Christian (Melkite) roof. To this end, chapels dedicated to various rites were consecrated within its walls. In 1816, J. L. Burckhardt was shown the remains of Syrian, Armenian, Coptic and Roman Catholic chapels.[630] The Catholic or 'Latin' one, dedicated to Saint Catherine, was mentioned in several pilgrim accounts and seems to have moved at various locations through the centuries.[631] Its final position was near the western wall and the visitors' cells, where it was seen in 1483 by F. Fabri[632] and visited in 1720 by the Jesuit Father Claude Sicard, the *prefetto* of Egypt (French, 1677-1726, also visited Horeb on 12 September - 1 October 1722 and ascended Hagia Koryphē on 16 September).[633] In 1697 Antoine Morison (French, canon of the Church of Saint Peter in Bar-le-Duc, at the Monastery between 20 November and 2 December, at Hagia Koryphē on the 23rd) noted that it was infrequently used, perhaps every 15 or 20 years.[634] Richard Pococke (English vicar-general of the Protestant Church of Ireland, 1704-1765, figure 98), visiting Horeb in Easter 1739, was one of the last to perform a service in it.[635]

Similar tolerance (or versatility) was extended to Hagia Koryphē, where a minuscule chapel to the north of the main, Orthodox one was dedicated to 'Latin' worship (roughly corresponding to the modern *parakella*, figures 8: O, 58 and 59). It measured five by three *pas* (approximately 3.1x1.86 m) and was dedicated since

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[630] Burckhardt 1822: 542-3.
[631] Rabino 1938: 35-6; Kraack 2001: 92-3, 96-7.
[632] Fabri 1897: 612-4. Several other visitors reported this chapel by the hostel; see Taifel 1598: 27; Teufel 1972: 169.
[633] Sicard 1982: 131. On C. Sicard, see Eckenstein 1921: 180; Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 248. On a map based on his observations, see Fontaine 1955: 73-8.
[634] Morison 1704: 109.

at least the fourteenth century to the Archangel Michael (section 4.2.3).[636] A dedication to the Ascension was also mentioned in the seventeenth and the eighteenth century.[637] Thus, the summit accommodated within its limited space the main Christian sects and Muslim devotion.

The number of pilgrimage accounts from Byzantium is relatively small in comparison to those from the 'Latin' West.[638] This was not due to fewer eastern pilgrims but to the mentality of the western ones and the importance pilgrimage indulgencies had for them. They placed their own footprints in those of sacred figures, aspiring to a concrete experience of salvation rather than a spiritual ascent[639] (exemplified in Orthodox monasticism by the *Heavenly Ladder* or *Klimax*, see section 3.4). Pious western travellers, like the Augustine monk Jacopo da Verona who arrived at the Monastery on September 10, 1335, and the Dominican F. Fabri who visited 148 years later, counted indulgencies and had a precise idea of the amount of 'indulgence for penance and error' every step bestowed upon them.[640]

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[635] Pococke 1814: 293. Mahfouz Labib, based exclusively on French language accounts, reported C. Sicard's mass in 1720 as the last known; see Labib 1961: 121.
[636] Meistermann 1909: 150-1; Rabino 1938: 36-7; Dahari 2000: 31. For an early reference in a 1395 travel narrative, see Anglure 1878: 51; Labib 1961: 45. For dimensions, see Palerne 1991: 151. Although Mahfouz Labib (1961: 87) assumed that the Roman Catholic use of the chapel only started in the fifteenth century, it is likely that it was used to this end from earlier on.
[637] For the alternative dedication to the Ascension, see the narratives of Gabriel de Brémond, who visited Sinai in 1643-1645 (Bremond 1680: 144-5 for an Italian translation), and W. Daniel, who visited the Monastery in December 1701 (Pitts *et al.* 1949: 81).
[638] Talbot 2008: 39.
[639] Dansette 2001: 83. On reservations among the Oriental clergy in Islamic lands regarding the practice of pilgrimage, see Eddé *et al.* 1997: 103-4.
[640] Jacopo 1950: 8; Fabri 1897: 608-10. Indulgencies were not granted in an arbitrary fashion; they were regulated by the popes at the request of the Monastery; see Fabri 1897: 610. John XXII (1249-1334, on the throne 1316-1334) in 1328 and 1334 granted two *bullae* ensuring pilgrims to Sinai a year of indulgence; see Eckenstein 1921: 153; Labib 1961: 56.

A successful Holy Land visit ensured more than a safe passage to heaven. It also conferred status to the pilgrim on earth. For noblemen or men of rank who were publicly deemed responsible for improper acts (violence, lying, debauchery) pilgrimage was an act of redemption.[641] Tokens of its undertaking were necessary for forgiveness – one of the reasons why souvenir rings were so popular and also why pieces of Saint Catherine's sepulchre or of the rock over cave B at Hagia Koryphē were frequently chipped off.[642] The achievement was celebrated in written word and 'monumental' souvenirs, either left at the Monastery (for example the graffiti at the 'Crusader Refectory,' see section 4.2.3, or pieces of paper inscribed with names on the walls of the chapel of Saint Catherine) or erected at public spaces back in the homeland.[643]

4.2.1. Islamic patronage

The closest that the Sinaitic holy sites and clergy ever came to extinction was in 1008-1009, when the Fāṭimid caliph al-Ḥākim 'bi ᶜAmr Allah' (985-1021, ruled 996-1021) launched an attack on all monasteries and churches under his authority. The culmination of these acts was the demolition of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem (1009).[644] The fate of the Monastery of Saint Catherine was better:[645]

> '[...] he also sent to the desert a desert Arab, Ibn Gagiat [*sic*, Ibn Ghiyāth] was his name, with a large force, to demolish the Monastery of Sinai and the remaining chapels of this Mountain, that Christians had built up to then. At that time an Egyptian monk named Solomon was in the Monastery, the

[641] Saint-Génois 1846: volume I, 14-5.
[642] Fabri 1897: 625.
[643] Kraack 2001: 88-9, 93-106. For paper souvenirs, see Fabri 1897: 613-4.
[644] Tritton 1970: 54-5.
[645] Author's translation.

> offspring of noble ancestors and a very wise man, who hoped that the desolation of Melek Dahar [*sic*, the caliph] would not reach in this deepest of deserts and he consoled the Sinai monks who suspected every misfortune. However, when he heard that Gagiat was heading purposely against them and that he destroyed the monasteries of Souveision and many more, then he was overcome by great fear. Nevertheless, he was not desperate or mortified but thought that he could be victorious against the barbarism of Gagiat through gifts. Thence he convened the monks, agreed with them what to do, took with him two or three elders and proceeded at a day's distance to welcome him, bringing humble gifts of food, and others similar. The barbarian, thanks to divine will, received him with a gladdened face and asked him what he wanted. Solomon replied that he had come to prostrate himself in front of him and plead him to have mercy upon his brothers and his Monastery. And he used in his speech all the words that were befitting and could soften his savagery, changing his mind as far as monastic wealth was concerned, and promising him greater benefactions in return for his benevolence, and finally he persuaded Gagiat to stay where he met him, and he would bring him there all the gold and silver vessels of the Monastery, upon receiving which the barbarian changed his mind about destroying the Sinai brethren and departed.' **(Text LVI)**

The monastic tradition preserved in this undated Greek text, a *Perigraphē* (*Description*) of the Holy Mount first printed in 1710 (the edition used here was printed in Venice in 1817),[646] gives a plausible explanation for the salvation of the Monastery.[647] In Adémar de Chabannes' (988-1034) early eleventh-century *Chronicle* the rescue is miraculous but no less interesting:[648]

> 'And in the monastery on Mount Sinai, ten thousand Saracen soldiers came to destroy it, but when they were only four miles away, they beheld the whole mountain on fire and flames reaching for the sky and because of that both buildings and people were spared. When these were reported to the king of Babylon, remorse came upon him and the Saracen people for the evils they caused to the Christians and he declared a law by which the basilica of the glorious Holy Sepulchre was rebuilt.' **(Text LVII)**

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[646] *Perigraphē* 1978: 123-4. The *Perigraphē* used Nektarios' *Epitome* as its main source; see section 4.3.3.1; Popescu-Belis & Mouton 2006: 192-5, 205. There exist versions in Greek, Arabic and Turkish; see Popescu-Belis & Mouton 2006: 195-220.

[647] On this tradition, see Grēgoriadēs 1875: 78-80; Amantos 1953: 31; Sōtēriou & Sōtēriou 1958: 8; Eddé *et al.* 1997: 71-2. It was also recorded in Nektarios' 1659-1660 *Epitome* (section 4.3.3); see Nektarios 1980: 193-4. For a reference in a pilgrimage account, see Van Egmont & Heyman 1759: 163.

[648] Author's translation, from the Latin original and the French translation in Adémar 1947: 186-7 (chapter XLVII). On the text, see Eckenstein 1921: 144.

Adémar's picture of Hagia Koryphē in flames resembles the miraculous rescue narrated by Ammonios (section 2.4.3) and the phenomena described by Anastasios (section 2.4.6). It was a standard theme in Sinaitic lore, continuously repeated and stressing the shielding action of Hagia Koryphē against aggressors. This time, the summit's protection extended as far as inspiring the reconstruction of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, a decision that was actually taken by al-Ḥākim's successor ᶜAlī al-Zāhir (1005-1039, ruled 1021-1036) as late as 1027.[649]

Al-Ḥākim's hostility towards Christian institutions was unusual within Fāṭimid policy.[650] Traditional historiography (probably tainted by Sunni hatred for the heterodox ruler) ascribed his behaviour to madness. However, it seems that there were financial pressures that urged him to confiscate the substantial property of the Christian clergy.[651] Furthermore, his aspiration to assume the role of the *Mahdī*, the 'Guided One,' the Redeemer of Islam, must have inspired such extreme acts.[652]

In any case, the role played by the monk Solomon in preventing the destruction of the Monastery extended beyond changing the 'desert Arab' (Bedouin?) Ibn Ghiyāth's mind. Solomon was even mentioned by the Christian chronicler Yaḥyā ibn Saᶜīd in the early eleventh century as influencing al-Ḥākim himself into annulling some extreme measures against the Christians towards the

[649] Tritton 1970: 55; Eddé *et al.* 1997: 72.
[650] Most of the surviving Fāṭimid decrees (eight out of thirteen) granted privileges and tax concessions to the Sinai Monastery and were preserved within its walls or in priories at Constantinople and Cairo; see Stern 1960: 444; Stern 1964a: 3-4, 7-11, 35-84; Eddé *et al.* 1997: 67-8, 101 note 3.
[651] The practice was not unknown to other caliphs; see Eddé *et al.* 1997: 70, 72.
[652] Eddé *et al.* 1997: 73.

end of his rule.[653] Even if the monk's influence upon the ruler was exaggerated, it must be connected with the respect Muslims had for the 'Mount of the Law' (section 4.1). Perhaps the supernatural phenomena described by Adémar were a metaphor for the influence of the Sinaitic clergy emanating from Hagia Koryphē.

No contemporary document survives testifying to al-Ḥākim's change of mind. However, an 1169 decree by Shīrkūh, vizier of the Fāṭimid caliph al-ᶜAḍīd (1149-1171, ruled 1160-1171), referred to 'rules established during al-Ḥākim's time.'[654] Furthermore, a decree granting privileges to the Monastery from the time of the Mamlūk sultan Barqūq (ruled 1382-1389, 1390-1399), dated 1398, alluded to a now lost decree by al-Ḥākim,[655] probably the same 'rules' mentioned by Shīrkūh (on protection decrees for the Monastery, see sections 4.1 and 4.3.3).

Another incident traditionally associated with al-Ḥākim's aggression was the conversion of the refectory opposite the *katholikon* into a mosque (section 3.2).[656] According to the story, the monks themselves effected the conversion overnight and invited the assailant (Ibn Ghiyāth?) to pray in the 'new' mosque. Since no fighting could take place near a mosque, the Monastery was spared.[657] The story of the mosque's dedication has been dated to different times during the Muslim era, for example in the ninth century[658] or during the rule of Selim I (section 4.1).[659]

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[653] Eddé *et al.* 1997: 72-3. On Yaḥyā, an Egyptian who moved to Antioch *circa* 1014, see Eddé *et al.* 1997: 159. His text is quoted in Eddé *et al.* 1997: 197-9.
[654] Stern 1964a: 80-84.
[655] Stern 1964a: 41.
[656] The connection has been refuted by some scholars; see Eddé *et al.* 1997: 102.
[657] Another conversion of a chapel into a mosque was suggested by Uzi Dahari at the Dayr Antush site, a few miles east of Horeb. The date of the conversion was placed in the ᶜAbbāsid or Fāṭimid period; see Dahari 2000: 100-01.
[658] Kamil 1991: 27 (she also mentions the al-Ḥākim version on page 51).
[659] In 1653, bitter animosity between the archbishop of Sinai Iōasaph (ruled 1617-1660) and the

A piece of wooden mosque furniture (a *kursi*, stool or box[660]) bearing an inscription and preserved in the Monastery could provide clues on the date of the conversion and on prayer places at Hagia Koryphē and Pharan (figures 72-77). The text of the inscription is as follows:[661]

> 'In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. He who ordered the making of the candlesticks and blessed seats and this blessed mosque that is at the higher monastery and the three oratories that are at the place of the conference of Moses (may peace be with him) and the [small] mosque that is on the mountain of the monastery of Pharan and the oratory at the foot of New Pharan and the minaret on the edge of the plain is the watchful prince, the chosen one, the light and defender of the nation Abū Manṣūr Anūshtakīn, the *amīr*.' **(Text LXI)**

In his discussion of the inscription Bernhard Moritz identified the donor, on the basis of his *nisba* which he translated as 'the slave of al-Āmir' (*al-Āmirī*), to an undocumented official during the period of caliph al-Āmir (1096-1130, ruled 1101-1130),[662] a view followed by subsequent scholars.[663] He claimed that the *kursi* should be contemporary with the dated 1106 minbar (discussed below) and

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patriarch of Alexandria led to the plundering of the Tzouvania (the Monastery's Cairo priory, see section 4.3.3) by Ottoman militia at the request of the patriarch. Subsequently, a room therein was converted into a mosque (complete with minaret); see Amantos 1953: 55-6. The Monastery only regained full control of the Tzouvania in 1780; see Skrobucha 1966: 95. Such conversions had obviously become customary in order to avoid trouble with the Muslim authorities.

[660] The word *kursi* is usually translated as 'stool,' however the object was in all probability not destined to be sat on. The four pointed finials with which the corner feet terminate would make sitting on it extremely uncomfortable (figure 77). No bottom piece survives, therefore it is difficult for the *kursi* to have been a Qur'ān manuscript box. Finally, there is no top surface and no brackets or slits that would allow a now-lost top to fit in, consequently its use as a book stand is not apparent, although it remains the most probable one; see Jaussen 1935-1940: 19-23. The word *kursi* was also used for Qur'ān stands; see Sadan 1970: 1371, 1372 note 4; Sadan 1976: 124-5, 124-5 note 470.

[661] Author's translation. German translation in Moritz 1918: 53; French translation in Rabino 1935: 36, 87-8, 215, inscription 54, plate XI and Rabino 1938: 41-2, 107. On the Pharan oratory, see Grossmann 2002: 42, 42 note 82, 121, 121 note 174.

[662] Moritz 1918: 54.

[663] Rabino 1938: 39; Jacopo 1950: 198 note 238; Daumas 1951: 384, 394; Hobbs 1995: 169; Wolff 2003: 219.

supposed that the Monastery mosque was converted in order to service a 200-men strong garrison posted to prevent possible Crusader infiltration into South Sinai.[664]

However, it would be preferable to identify the *kursi* Abū Manṣūr Anūshtakīn with the Turkish general Abū Manṣūr Anūshtakīn ibn ᶜAbdallāh al-Dizbirī, an *amīr* (general, commander), active during the rule of caliphs al-Ḥākim, al-Zāhir and al-Mustanṣir (1029-1094, ruled 1036-1094).[665] He was already a general in 1024,[666] served successfully as governor of Damascus from 1029 and died there in 1042.[667] The Sinai donation must have taken place before his Syrian appointment in 1029, close to the time the caliph al-Zāhir decided to allow the reconstruction of the Holy Sepulchre (1027).

If indeed the inscription referred to donations by Anūshtakīn al-Dizbirī, happening one hundred years earlier than previously thought, it could be suggested that the erection and dedication of the mosques and oratories in Horeb and Pharan fell within a wider initiative of the Fāṭimid government to reconstruct Christian pilgrimage sites after al-Ḥākim's ruinations. This policy could have had the ultimate goal of laying a strong Muslim hold on them rather than obliterating them altogether. Against this background of Muslim devotion, Hagia Koryphē

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[664] Moritz 1918: 57-60; see also Skrobucha 1966: 62. Although the possibility of a dispatch against the Crusaders should not be rejected, it is preferable to connect the *kursi* with an earlier programme.

[665] The name 'Anūshtakīn' is also familiar from al-Ḥākim's favourite Muhammad Anūshtakīn al-Darazī (died *circa* 1019-1020), one of the founders of the Druze religion who may have given his name to it. The title in the *kursi* inscription ('defender of the nation,' a military allusion) and the extreme views held by al-Darazī make him a highly unlikely candidate for the Sinai donation.

[666] Canard 2009.

[667] Anūshtakīn was mentioned in the *Chronicon Syriacum* of Grīghōr Abū al-Faraj ('Bar Hebraeus,' 1226-1286); see Gregory 1932: 222.

took pride of place because of its Mosaic association and was graced with no less than three buildings (and a fourth one at its foot, inside the Monastery).[668]

What seems to have attracted little attention from scholars so far is the reference to three 'oratories' on the Mountain of Moses (Horeb). Moritz identified one of them with the Hagia Koryphē mosque and went on suggesting that the other two were the chapels of Hagia Koryphē and Prophētēs Hēlias – a surprising instance of Muslim patronage of Christian cultic buildings that made even Moritz uneasy.[669] There is little doubt that the first oratory stood where the Hagia Koryphē mosque is today,[670] although some devotional structure was probably already in place since the seventh century (section 4.1). However, no other Muslim cultic building survives from the vicinity or was mentioned in any of the numerous pilgrim and traveller accounts.

Another possible but likewise unsatisfactory explanation is that the *kursi* inscription referred to the restoration of two prayer niches (among the fourteen which survive around the mountain and were examined in section 2.5, figure 30). They have been dated to the Early Christian period and their remarkable survival must be attributed to several restorations since. However, the monks do not include them among Christian holy sites and do not take care of them, a task obviously performed by the Bedouin. The reason why they were described as 'oratories' rather than mosques could be their odd orientation towards Hagia Koryphē. 'Open air'

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[668] There is no evidence of the two candlesticks referred to in the inscription. Two bronze candlesticks with a dedicatory Kufic inscription, 1.45 m high and attributed to twelfth-thirteenth-century Mosul, are mentioned in Rabino 1938: 35; it has not been possible to identify them with actual candlesticks in the Monastery.
[669] Moritz 1918: 56-8.

mosques are documented from around the Negev and Sinai since the early Islamic period,[671] and the Horeb low curved walls may have served as prayer spots for local and visiting Muslims, satellite sites around the summit mosque.

The Hagia Koryphē mosque was referred to by the geographer al-Idrīsī (1100-1165/6), writing *circa* 1154:[672]

> 'Jabal al-Ṭūr [...] is a high mountain into which you go up by steps, and at its summit is a mosque where there is a well of stagnant water, from which those who come and go may drink.'

Al-Idrīsī had not visited Sinai in person but his information, probably gathered at the court of the Norman king Roger II (1095-1154) in Sicily, must have been up to date.[673] A few years later, a Jewish rabbi named Jacob, son of Nathaniel the Cohen, who visited Sinai before 1187, used the term 'synagogue of Ishmaelites' to describe a mosque on Hagia Koryphē.[674] The tradition of Sinai patronage among the Fāṭimid elite continued into the twelfth century as testified by a *minbar* within the Monastery mosque dated by inscription to 1106 (figures 72, 78, 79):[675]

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[670] Panayotidi & Kalopissi-Verti 2007: no pagination.

[671] Finkelstein & Perevolotsky 1990: 69. For a seventh- to eighth-century dating of the Negev examples, see Avni 1994: 84-91, 95.

[672] Le Strange 1890: 73. French translation in Édrisi 1836: 332. On al-Idrīsī, see Eckenstein 1921: 146; Le Strange 1890: 7.

[673] None of the medieval geographers writing in Arabic had paid a visit to Horeb; see section 4.1 for al-Muqaddasī (945/6-1000); section 1.4 for Yāqūt 'al-Rūmī' (1179-1229) and Abu'l-Fida' (1273-1331); section 3.1.5 for al-Maqrīzī. The same was true for Ibn Hawqal (tenth century); see Ebn Haukal 1800: 29. Ibn al-Wardī (1290-1348) mentioned the 'dendrite' rocks of Sinai (dendrite pyrolusite, see Hobbs 1995: 109) which remain popular as souvenirs to this day:

> 'If you smash the stone of this mountain you always get the image of the *wasag* tree which the Jews glorify and it is called 'the Jews' tree.'

See El Daly 2000: 30, 30 note 33. The *wasag* tree is box thorn (*Lycium europaeum* or *Lycium arabicum*). Dendrite stones were also mentioned in pilgrim narratives; see Frescobaldi *et al.* 1948: 118 (for Gucci); Taifel 1598: 30; Teufel 1972: 173; Fernberger 1999: 31; Kiechel 1866: 355; Kiechel 1972: 71; Harant 1608: 99; Harant 1855: 82; Harant 1972: 130; Monconys 1973: 103; Coppin 1991: 272; Morison 1704: 103; Prefetto 1810: 247; Prefetto 1812: 288; Van Egmont & Heyman 1759: 172; *Perigraphē* 1978: 144; Skrobucha 1966: 55.

[674] Negev 1977b: 80.

[675] Translated in Skrobucha 1966: 60-61, with corrections by the author. French translations in

'In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. There is no God but Allah; he has no fellow; to him belongs dominion and to him honour is due. From his gracious hand come life and likewise death, and he is mighty over / all things. From God comes victory, and mastery is near for the bondservant of God and his representative, Abū ᶜAlī al-Manṣūr, the Imam al-Āmir bi'Aḥkāmi Allah, / Commander of the Faithful, God's blessing be upon him and his honoured fathers and his expected sons. This preaching-desk was ordered to be made by the right honourable / lord, Prince of the Army, Sword of Islam, Helper of Islam, Protector and Judge of Mankind, Guide and Protector of the Faithful, / Abū'l Qāsim Shāhinshāh, through him may God uphold religion and give joy to the Commander of the Faithful through his long life and uphold / his power and exalt his word. Done in the month Rabi I of the year 500, to the glory of God. **(Text LVIII)**

The *minbar* was dedicated to the mosque by al-Afḍal Shāhinshāh (1066-1121), powerful vizier and regent to the throne from 1094 to 1121, during the rule of the Fāṭimid caliphs al-Mustanṣir, al-Mustaᶜlī (died in 1101, ruled 1094-1101) and al-Āmir.[676] Al-Afḍal was the vizier who fought against the armies of the First Crusade and lost Jerusalem to them in July 1099, a year after recovering it from the Artūqids.[677] He also donated a splendid prayer niche at the mosque of Ibn Ṭūlūn in Cairo.[678] By the time of his Sinai donation he was the most powerful individual in the caliphate. A few months earlier (August 1105) he had been defeated at a battle in al-Ramla by the army of Baldwin, king of Jerusalem,[679] and was engaged in warfare until his murder in 1121. It is likely that al-Afḍal's pious donation to the Sinai Monastery mosque was connected with his military campaigns in Palestine. The reluctance of the monks to accept Baldwin as a pilgrim in 1115 must be related with al-Afḍal's patronage (section 4.2).

Rabino 1935: 36, 36-7 note 2, 88, 216, inscription 55, plates XII-XIII and in Rabino 1938: 41, 107. On the minbar, see Moritz 1918: 49-52; Rabino 1938: 41; Jacopo 1950: 198 note 238; Amantos 1953: 32; Skrobucha 1966: 60-2, figure on page 61; Moraitou 2007: 186-7, figure 15.

[676] Rabino 1935: 36-7 note 2; Setton 1969: 94. Jill Kamil (1991: 51) confused the donor of the *minbar* with the donor of the *kursi*.

[677] Setton 1969: 95-8.

The minaret on the northeastern corner of the mosque (figure 80) also dates from the early twelfth century as demonstrated by dendrochronological analysis of its roof timber. Furthermore, the wooden narthex doors of the *katholikon* have been attributed to the eleventh or the twelfth century (section 3.2). It would not be an overstatement to suggest that this period marked a renaissance of Sinaitic prestige connected more with Muslim patronage than with the presence of Christian Crusaders, as previously thought. Gifts to the Monastery were not only buildings and works of art. Fertile lands in Egypt were donated by the Fāṭimids before the late twelfth century. They were under caliphal protection and produced considerable quantities of wheat for the needs of the monks and for sale.[680]

While describing the chapel of the Burning Bush to the east of the *katholikon* during his 1217 pilgrimage, Thietmar (section 4.2.2) noted that everybody removed their shoes before entering and added:[681]

> 'When the Great Sultan, the king of Babylon [Cairo], visited this church, out of respect for the place, he entered with humility and bare feet.' **(Texts LIX** and **LX)**

The 'sultan' mentioned has been identified as the Ayyūbid general and ruler al-Malik al-ᶜĀdil I (1145-1218, ruled 1200-1218) who probably visited Horeb on his way to Damascus in 1217[682] and had issued a decree protecting the Sinai monks in 1176 (much in the Fāṭimid tradition).[683] However, it has recently been

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[678] Behrens-Abouseif 1989: 54.
[679] Setton 1969: 386.
[680] Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006: 27-8.
[681] Author's translation. In a 1304 pilgrimage account by five Franciscan monks, the reverence ('*maxima devotione*') and material support of both '*Saraceni*' and the sultan ('*Soldanus*') towards Horeb are mentioned; see Fratres Minores 1919: 72. For similar mentions in pilgrim accounts, see Frescobaldi *et al.* 1948: 60 (for Frescobaldi).
[682] Thietmarus 1857: 42 note 504; Thietmar 1936: 41 note 64; Eckenstein 1921: 151.
[683] Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006: 42.

suggested on the basis of the text attributed to 'Abu'l-Makārim' (section 3.1.5) that the 'sultan' was indeed al-ᶜĀdil's brother 'Saladin,' Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb (*circa* 1138-1193, ruled 1174-1193), passing through Sinai during the 'Egyptian' phase of his rule (1169-1182), probably around 1174-1176.[684] Saladin was mentioned as appreciating the Monastery and its ornaments and as donating the revenue of a village to the Monastery.[685]

The tradition of Sinaitic site veneration among eminent Muslim figures and rulers begun as early as the seventh century (section 4.1), was revived in the eleventh century, continued into the twelfth (or thirteenth)[686] and even survived down to the nineteenth century, when Muḥammad ᶜAlī Pasha (1769?-1849, ruler of Egypt from 1805) was mentioned as visiting the Monastery and praying in its mosque several times, an example followed by his grandson ᶜAbbās Pasha in 1853 (section 1.5.3).[687] Moments of tension were also recorded, like the 1401 plundering of the Monastery and murder of the bishop (Iōannēs?) by the Mamlūk army[688] and the (brief) confiscation of the Monastery's land holdings in 1431, recorded in a mid-sixteenth-century pilgrimage account of an anonymous Franciscan monk.[689] Nevertheless, violence on behalf of the official administration was rare and it seems that most incidents of aggression were generated by the Bedouin.

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[684] Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006: 42-5.
[685] Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006: 27-8, 52. The decree mentioning Saladin's favour (probably expressed over several decrees issued by him but now lost) was granted by al-ᶜĀdil in 1176; see Heidemann *et al.* 1997: 81-107.
[686] Dansette 2001: 73.
[687] Pardieu 1851: 189; Eckenstein 1921: 185-6; Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006: 43 note 132.
[688] Grēgoriadēs 1875: 81-2; *Perigraphē* 1978: 124-5.
[689] Luke 1927: v (for the date of the manuscript), 58.

A final piece of evidence for the respect Hagia Koryphē commanded among the followers of Islam was the discovery of a small number of short inscriptions during the site's excavation.[690] They were written with ink or pigment or engraved on pieces of marble and sandstone which were originally part of the *opus sectile* or other revetment decorations of the collapsed Justinianic basilica. Most of them were invocations to God for forbearance, help and mercy, while others referred to pilgrimage or commemorated deceased persons. Although some of them may have been left by Christian pilgrims, others leave no doubt that they were dedicated by Muslims. No dates have so far been suggested for any them by their researcher but they obviously postdate the collapse of the basilica.[691] More importantly, they provide concrete evidence from the site itself for the *ziyāra* tradition mentioned in sources since the first Islamic century (section 4.1).[692]

4.2.2. Early medieval pilgrims (ninth to thirteenth century)

Even before the first Crusader state (the Kingdom of Jerusalem) was founded in 1099, western travellers to the Holy Land must have followed Egeria's example and added Mount Sinai to their pilgrim routes. References to and brief descriptions of localities on Horeb in early itineraries testify to a broad knowledge of the place. One of the earliest itineraries was the *Commemoratorium on the Churches of Jerusalem*, of *circa* 808, surviving in a single ninth-century manuscript, probably

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[690] For more Arabic inscriptions by obviously Christian pilgrims, presumably from around or inside the Hagia Koryphē chapel, see Rabino 1935: 74, 100; Rabino 1938: 37.
[691] Panayotidi & Kalopissi-Verti 2007: no pagination, material studied by Dr Ioannis Meimaris.
[692] Several Christian pilgrims also mentioned Muslim pilgrims to Hagia Koryphē. For two of the earliest among them, see Fabri 1897: 559; Harff 1946: 145-6.

compiled under the auspices of the emperor Charlemagne (Carolus Magnus, 742-814, ruled 768-814).[693] The churches of Horeb were listed as follows:[694]

> 'On holy Mount Sinai four churches: (1) one where the Lord spoke with Moses on the summit of the mountain; (2) another of St. Elijah; (3) a third of St. [Elisha?] (4) the fourth the Monastery of St. Mary: the Abbot Elias, 30 monks; there are 7,700 steps for climbing up and down the mountain.'

The Hagia Koryphē church was mentioned first and other churches followed in the order they appeared as one descended Horeb. If the third church was indeed dedicated to the prophet Elisha (the reading is conjectural), it could have been near the chapel of Prophētēs Hēlias, where a chapel with that name was mentioned in later narrations.[695] The number of monks was modest but the very fact that it was listed and the name of their abbot given reveals the accuracy of the report. The number of steps (7,700) probably referred to their total, counting them on the way up and on the way down.[696]

The work usually referred to by the name of a certain 'Fetellus,' who was one of its early editors, must be dated a few decades after the coming of the Crusaders (*circa* 1130). It contains a list of the stations of the Exodus and twelfth among them is Mount Sinai. Its writer drew on sources as diverse as the Bible ('Mount Synai always smokes and flashes with fiery brightness,' see sections 2.4.3, 2.4.6 and 4.2.1), Eusebios and later geographers ('Mount Synai is in Arabia,' see section 1.4), anecdotal information and first-hand accounts ('...the

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[693] Wilkinson 1977: 12.
[694] English translation in Wilkinson 1977: 138. It has not been possible to find the Latin text. On the text, see Eckenstein 1921: 137.
[695] Dahari 2000: 38. One of the earliest references to the prophet Elisha chapel appears in the text by 'Abu'l-Makārim' of the twelfth or the thirteenth century; see section 3.1.5; Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006: 21-2.
[696] A similar way of counting steps was used by 'Abu'l-Makārim' and al-Maqrīzī; see section 3.1.5.

ascent of it being of three thousand and five hundred steps,' a fairly accurate calculation). The passage on Hagia Koryphē reads:[697]

> 'Mount Synai is in Arabia, of very lofty height, and hard of access, the ascent of it being of three thousand and five hundred steps. Of Synai it is said by the most holy hermits and monks who dwell there, that from the time of Moses the place is the constant walking-place of heavenly angels. Mount Synai always smokes and flashes with fiery brightness. Of Synai it is said, and it is true, that every Sabbath heavenly fire flies around it, but does not burn; some it touches, but it does not hurt them, appearing most frequently as if in white fleeces with a slight movement encompassing the mountain, sometimes descending with an intolerable and terrible noise, those most holy inhabitants fleeing thence through the crypts and the cells of the cenobites. On the summit of Synai is a venerable and beautiful church, situated on the spot where God gave to Moses the Law written with His own finger on tablets of stone. Of so venerable dignity is the before-named church, that none dare to enter it, or even to ascend the mountain, unless they have first rendered themselves acceptable by confession, and afflicted themselves by fasting and prayers.'

The landmarks of the Sinaitic landscape, the ways and prescriptions of its visitation, the prohibitions and miraculous events associated with Hagia Koryphē had remained unaltered since Anastasios' time. Smoke, flashes, heavenly fire bring to mind similar phenomena described five centuries earlier (section 2.4.6), especially the incident of the eight hundred Armenian pilgrims **(text XXXI)**. By 'beautiful church' the writer must have meant the basilica, even though it had been destroyed by his time (section 4.1.3). Access to the site was still restricted and pilgrims were only admitted after undergoing the cleansing ritual of confession at the designated gateway (section 2.5). The persistence of these Hagia Koryphē traditions into the second millennium testifies to the sanctity of the site and the respect it commanded through periods of political and cultural change.[698]

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[697] English translation in Fetellus 1897: 15-6. It was not possible to find the Latin text.
[698] Twelfth-century pilgrims to Sinai who left no account of their journey include Philippe d'Alsace, count of Flanders and Vermandois (1143-1191), and Raynald de Châtillon (1125-1187) in 1117.

An anonymous work in English verse exemplifies early medieval itineraries which began to be composed in languages other than Latin, thus reaching wider audiences through public recitation. Even though its date of composition is uncertain, the fact that the dedication of the Monastery was to the Virgin Mary rather than Saint Catherine places it before the fourteenth century (section 4.1.4):[699]

'Now telle we of the Mount of Synai,
A full denote place sicurly,
[...] In that Mount upon hy,
Is a Mynstor of our Lady:
The Mynstor of the Busche men calle hit,
Wher in the body of Sent Katheryne was put.
Also behynde the hee Autere,
Is wher Jesu dud apere,
In that Chirche to Moisie,
When he kept Getro Madan schepe trulee.
In middez of that Hull is a place,
Where dud his penaunce the Prophet Helias;
In the hye of that Hull, by Clerkez sawez,
God yaf to Moises boothe the Lawez:
Written in Tabelez, wit outen misse,
Plenor remission ther hit is.
A Garden ther is witout distaunce,
Where Onorius dude his penaunce.
Another Hull also is there,
To the wiche Angelez dud bere
The blessed body of Sent Kateryne,
Sche was a holy Virgyn.'

A more detailed narration of a near-contemporary visit was given by Thietmar, visiting Horeb in 1217. His text survived in Latin and Dutch versions, evidence of the popularity such accounts enjoyed among learned audiences.[700] Thietmar described the Monastery focusing on the *katholikon* and the sepulchre of Saint Catherine, repeated the story of her relic's discovery, examined the life of the monks and detailed his ascent to Hagia Koryphē mentioning the Panagia tou

[699] Anonymous 1625: 1243. Lina Eckenstein (1921: 163-4) dated it around 1425.

Oikonomou chapel, the two gateways, the Prophētēs Hēlias chapel, the summit chapel dedicated to Moses ('*ecclesia Moysi*', '*Moyses Kerke*') and the caves.[701]

With the addition or omission of a few details, all pilgrimage accounts henceforth would follow the same pattern,[702] only to be fundamentally changed in the nineteenth century, when scholarly questions preoccupied visitors. Ascent to Horeb was effected via route A, included all landmarks easily accessible around it (but usually not the more distant chapels), culminated at Hagia Koryphē and was often followed by another ascent (on a different day) to Hagia Aikaterinē. The experience of the pilgrim had changed little since the sixth century and the only new landmarks were the ones associated with the virgin martyr from Alexandria (her mountaintop *inventio* place and her Monastery sepulchre).

The material record from the Hagia Koryphē excavation for the period in question includes a (proportionately) large quantity of green glazed wheel-made lamp fragments with long nozzles, funnel-shaped filling holes and small vertical ring handles (figures 81, 82 and 83). The type is well documented and dated to the

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[700] Thietmarus 1857: 41-8 (Latin version); Thietmar 1936 (Dutch version). On Thietmar's narrative, see Eckenstein 1921: 150-2.

[701] Quotes from Thietmarus 1857: 47; Thietmar 1936: 69.

[702] Two anonymous Holy Land itineraries from the thirteenth century were published in *De Via* 1906: 406 and *Itinerarium* 1906: 409 (the latter was probably an expanded version of the former; see *Itinerarium* 1906: 408). To these can be added the *Fragments relatifs à la Galilée* by 'Ernoul,' *circa* 1231, in both its complete and abridged versions; the anonymous *Les pelerinages por aler en Iherusalem* of *circa* 1231; and the two versions of the anonymous *Les chemins et les pelerinages de la Terre Sainte*, of before 1265; see Michelant & Raynaud 1882: 63-4, 82-3, 98, 185-6, 196-7. Philippe Mouskes' (before 1220-1282) *Chronique rimée*, second half of the thirteenth century, was equally laconic; see Mouskes 1836: CCVII-CCXXVII, 422-3; Michelant & Raynaud 1882: 119; Labib 1961: 31-3; Deluz 2001: 186. All these accounts referred to both the prophet Moses and Saint Catherine and some described the Monastery and the life of the monks in rudimentary fashion. The 1240 itinerary by Albertus Stadensis (died *circa* 1264, see Albertus 1906: 183, 185) and an anonymous thirteenth-century geographical compendium (Anonymous 1906: 403) were probably copied from sources dating to the mid-twelfth century and only made the briefest mention of 'Mount Sinai.'

late Fāṭimid or early Ayyūbid periods (late twelfth to thirteenth century).[703] A rare variant, datable to the twelfth century, is the similarly shaped but cobalt and manganese-painted (rather than green-glazed) lamp in figure 84.[704] The number of lamps was not matched by a similar quantity of table vessels (as in previous periods, see section 4.1.1) and testifies to the brevity of visits on the site and the absence of building projects which would have left larger utilitarian vessel sherds (as in the sixth century, see section 3.3).[705]

4.2.2.1. Jewish pilgrimage

The earliest Jewish visitors came to Hagia Koryphē in the Early Christian era (section 2.2). By the Middle Ages, a Jewish pilgrimage tradition had been established, following the Christian tradition and possibly encouraged by the Islamic one. In the second half of the twelfth century, rabbi Jacob provided detailed information which testifies to an actual visit (section 4.2.1), whereas a contemporary Jewish voyager, Benjamin from the Navarre town of Tudela in the Iberian Peninsula (travelled 1165-1173), gave a vague description which was probably borrowed from other travellers.[706] Depictions of Mount Sinai in illuminated Haggadah and other manuscripts were highly stylised and show no effort to depict Horeb[707] – it was only in the twentieth century that modern European visual material informed Jewish perceptions of the Mount of the Law (figure 148).

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[703] Kubiak 1970: 13-15, figures 10a-b, 11a-b, plates 2/12, 3/13 ('*type I*'); Rosenthal & Sivan 1978: 153 (lamp 633).
[704] Kubiak 1970: 14; Philon 1980: 61, figure 133.
[705] This material was researched by the author.
[706] Benjamin 1840: 159; Benjamin 1983: 135. On Benjamin, see Eckenstein 1921: 146.
[707] Vilnay 1963: XXXVI, XL, 217-9.

In later years, Jews would appear frequently in the Sinai textual record. Krystoff Harant z Polžic a z Bezdružic (Czech, 1564-1621, visiting Horeb in October 1598, see section 4.3.2) mentioned a group of Jews on pilgrimage miraculously prevented from going through the gateways of the stepped route (route A, sections 1.5.3 and 2.5, figures 15 and 16) and having to be baptised Christians before continuing to the summit.[708] The story had also been told to F. Fabri in 1483 and was probably a *topos* confirming, nevertheless, a flow of Jewish visitors.[709]

A little-known piece of information could shed light on this prohibition. Early in the rule of the Ottoman sultan Süleyman I 'the Magnificent' (1494-1566, ruled 1520-1566) a petition was filed on behalf of the powerful Jewish community (*millet*). They requested control of the holy lands of Horeb where Moses had been given the Law. This was avoided by the prompt intervention of the Sinai monks who ensured that two decrees were issued by the sultan in 1522 and 1558 rejecting Jewish claims and preventing their access to Horeb.[710] Four centuries later these claims were forcefully repeated (with success) during the June 1967 'Six-Day War' which started the Israeli occupation of the Peninsula. After Sinai's restitution to Egypt thousands of Jews from Israel (on special 'pilgrim visas') and

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[708] Harant 1608: 89-90; Harant 1855: 74; French translation in Harant 1972: 117-8.
[709] Fabri 1897: 553-4. On the prohibition, see Eckenstein 1921: 172. The story appeared centuries later in Dumas 1839a: 93; Dumas 1839b: 250. John Lloyd Stephens (American, 1805-1852, visited Horeb in March 1836) mentioned that the Monastery's superior (*dikaios*?) told him of two 'Asiatic Jews' who had come disguised as Europeans in 1832 but were detected 'under their sheep's clothing' and cast out of the Monastery. Yet, Stephens saw on the wall of the convent the name of an American Jew; see Stephens 1837: 284; Stephens 1970: 194-5; on Stephens, see Davis 1996: 32-5; Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 249.
[710] The incident was mentioned by Amantos (1953: 47) but no reference to specific decrees or other reference was given.

from around the world continued unhindered to make the ascent to Hagia Koryphē, the place that 'marks the real beginning of the Jewish nation.'[711]

4.2.3. Late medieval pilgrims (fourteenth to fifteenth century)

The volume of pilgrim traffic to Sinai seems to have increased after the Crusaders' loss of Acre in 1291.[712] The fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries represent the highpoint of the pilgrimage phenomenon and a good number of the people attempting the perilous voyage narrated their adventures in writing. They came in groups of at least a dozen. Often one or more of them did not make the journey back and got buried in the Holy Land – a great indulgence indeed.[713] It must be stressed that the increased facility of publishing such narrations and the better rate of their survival is partially responsible for the larger number of late medieval accounts.

These accounts were not only numerous but also increasingly detailed. However, most of them repeated similar information on the standard Horeb landmarks.[714] They included, as one made the ascent from the Monastery, the 'spring of Moses' or 'of the shoemaker' (a new addition inspired by *Exodus* or connected to the Panagia tou Oikonomou story),[715] the Panagia tou Oikonomou chapel (another post-seventh-century site associated with a miracle, see section

[711] Hobbs 1995: 32.
[712] Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006: 2.
[713] Dansette 2001: 65.
[714] Skrobucha 1966: 80-2; Hobbs 1995: 234-5; Dansette 2001: 68-71.
[715] Fabri 1897: 552.

4.1), the two gateways (sections 1.5.3, 2.5, 4.2.2, 4.2.2.1) and chapels dedicated to the prophet Elijah, the prophet Elisha (section 4.2.2) and Saint Mary the Egyptian.

When on the summit pilgrims noticed the rock over cave B and the cave itself (section 1.5.3), the chapels on Hagia Koryphē (both the Christian Orthodox one, dedicated to Moses, and the Roman Catholic one of Archangel Michael, section 4.2), by now housing the indispensable relics of saints,[716] the mosque (sections 4.1 and 4.2.1), cave A (sections 1.5.3, 3.3, 4.1, 4.1.1) and the cisterns. The chapel was adorned with paintings depicting incidents of the Exodus, first described by the Franciscan Niccolò da Poggibonsi in spring 1349:[717]

> 'The church is very beautiful and it is small, placed on the summit of the mountain. This church is placed to the east and is separated with a small wall; and on this wall there is a painted panel, how Moses separated the Red Sea with a stick in his hand and how the people of Israel passed, and how the army of the Pharaoh drowned in the Red Sea; [...] In this church the entire story of Moses is painted with images in succession.' **(Text LXII)**

The 'small wall' of his account could have been an *iconostasis*, an altar screen, but no icons with similar subjects survive in the Monastery collection, therefore it is possible that the screen was of masonry and painted with frescoes.[718]

On the way down fewer attractions were offered and most pilgrims referred to Hagioi Tessarakonta and adjacent sites (for example the cave of Saint

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[716] References to relics in Hagia Koryphē chapels (other than that of Saint Catherine) date from the fourteenth century; see Frescobaldi *et al.* 1948: 61 (for Frescobaldi), 117 (for Gucci), 195 (for Sigoli); see also Eckenstein 1921: 158.

[717] Author's translation. On N. da Poggibonsi, see Poggibonsi 1881: 123-63; Poggibonsi 1927: 1, 15; Poggibonsi 1945: 122-34; Frescobaldi *et al.* 1948: 10; Wolff 2000: 36-45; Wolff 2003: 97, 197, 210, 221-4. The paintings were also seen by N. de Martoni in September 1394; see Martoni 1895: 609.

[718] In the early fourteenth century the chapel was in ruinous condition as attested by the following story. Sometime before 1312 Gabriel, the metropolitan of Soupakion (Petra), ascended Hagia Koryphē and found the church there in ruins. He decided to dispatch builders to erect a new chapel. In the meantime, the northern and eastern parts of the Monastery walls were severely damaged in the 30 April - 1 May 1312 earthquakes and the monks urged the builders to mend the walls instead of building a new church. It is unclear whether they also erected the painted chapel;

Onuphrius, section 2.2) before starting their ascent to Hagia Aikaterinē, by now safely identified with the finding place of the virgin Saint's body (section 4.1.4).

Some fourteenth-century accounts resembled earlier medieval itineraries in brevity and lack of detail.[719] Others were entertainingly inaccurate.[720] A few were entirely derivative, compiled by authors who had never attempted the journey.[721] Most were unremarkable in the uniformity of their memories.[722]

It is indicative of the margins for misunderstanding that the account of S. Sigoli, at Horeb in 1384 in the company of five of his compatriots, identified 'Mount Sinai' with the finding place of Saint Catherine's body (section 4.1.4) although he distinguished it from the 'Mount of the Law.' However, the accounts

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see Paisios 1978: 70-5, 109-10; Nektarios 1980: 197-8.

[719] For an anonymous fourteenth-century itinerary in French, see Michelant & Raynaud 1882: 104. For a Latin itinerary, see *Peregrinationes* 1927: 355. For a pilgrimage by five Franciscan monks in 1304, see Fratres Minores 1919: 72. Similarly brief are accounts of or references to other pilgrimages: Jacob von Bern, in the Monastery on September 10, 1346; see Röhricht & Meisner 1880: 59. Jean de D(e)ardel and Antoine de Monopole in 1377; see Robert 1884: 13; Labib 1961: 41. Peter Sparnau, Ulrich von Tennstädt and others in 1385; see Röhricht & Meisner 1880: 468-9. Jean le Meingre de Boucicault and Philippe d'Artois in 1389; see Labib 1961: 41. And Guillaume de Meuillon, baron of Arzeliers and lord of Ribiers in 1390-1391; see Labib 1961: 42.

[720] Rudolf de Frameynsperg, a knight visiting Horeb in 1346, reported having seen Moses' tomb in the Monastery, which was founded by the sultan of Cairo; see Frameynsperg 1725: 358-9; Röhricht & Meisner 1880: 468; Eckenstein 1921: 158; Dansette 2001: 66.

[721] Modern scholarship includes in these derivative accounts the travels of 'Jehan de Mandeville,' a knight born at Saint Albans, published in 1357-1371; see Eckenstein 1921: 157, 158; Letts 1949: 47 (for the Sinai section); Labib 1961: 36-40; Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 245. See also Milton 1996: 169-95 (for Sinai), a study arguing for Mandeville's authenticity.

[722] The Franciscan Antonius de Reboldis of Cremona, at the Monastery between 26 January and 4 February 1331, on Hagia Koryphē on January 29; see Reboldis 1890: 153, 166-9; Reboldis 1919: 329, 335-42; Eckenstein 1921: 157; Frescobaldi *et al.* 1948: 10; Dansette 2001: 66. Wilhelm von Baldensel (also known as Otto von Neuhaus), travelling in 1336; see Baldensel 1725: 343-5; Röhricht & Meisner 1880: 465-6; Eckenstein 1921: 157. The cleric Ludolf von Sudheim (or Suchen), travelling between 1336 and 1341, his account surviving in German and Latin versions; see Suchen 1848: 13; Sudheim 1884: 346-8; Röhricht & Meisner 1880: 466-7; Eckenstein 1921: 157; Sudheim 1937: 134-6; Frescobaldi *et al.* 1948: 10. Thomas de Swinburne had his travels narrated by his chaplain Thomas Brygg; see Brygg 1884: 382; Frescobaldi *et al.* 1948: 10; Labib 1961: 43; Champdor 1963: 25; Dansette 2001: 66. The lord Ogier d'Anglure, at the Monastery between 6 and 10 November 1395; see Anglure 1878: 46-53; Eckenstein 1921: 157; Frescobaldi *et al.* 1948: 11; Labib 1961: 43-7; Dansette 2001: 66. On fourteenth-century pilgrims in general, see Eckenstein 1921: 155 note 1, 156 note 1.

of two of his fellow travellers, the nobleman Leonardo Frescobaldi and the lord Giorgio Gucci, made the distinction clear, although they were all accompanied by the same guide.[723] Finally, Gucci reported that the reason for only a small part of the Saint's body surviving in the Monastery was its removal and burial by 'Saracens.'[724] Such instances exemplify the limitations of pilgrimage literature as a source of historical information.

However, some accounts provided valuable original details. A mosaic representing the Virgin Mary and Jesus, Saint Catherine and Moses over the main door into the *katholikon* is only attested in such accounts and no traces of it survive today. The most complete description was given by N. da Poggibonsi:[725]

> 'Over this door there is Virgin Mary with her little son in her hands in mosaic work; on one side there is the dear Saint Catherine and on the other Moses.' **(Text LXIII)**

A few years earlier (September 1335) the Italian Jacopo da Verona had added to his manuscript the first visual representation of the Horeb holy landscape. It was a summary sketch probably compiled from memory after his ascent of 12 September. It included the Monastery, its garden, the chapel of Panagia tou Oikonomou, the chapel at Prophētēs Hēlias, the Hagia Koryphē chapel and its mosque linked by

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[723] Frescobaldi *et al.* 1948: 58 (for their guide, friar Iōannēs of Candia, Crete), 196 (for Sigoli's account). L. Frescobaldi even attributed the confusion to the geographic proximity of the two mountains; see Frescobaldi *et al.* 1948: 65. A similar paragraph was included in the texts of J. da Verona and N. da Poggibonsi; see Jacopo 1950: 77; Poggibonsi 1945: 133. Fifteenth-century pilgrims were equally undecided as to these place names; see Fabri 1897: 550, 570, 584-7; Harff 1946: xxv. On the dates and accuracy of the accounts by Frescobaldi, Gucci and Sigoli, see Frescobaldi *et al.* 1948: 20-4; Eckenstein 1921: 158; Dansette 2001: 66; Wolff 2003: 208.

[724] Frescobaldi *et al.* 1948: 111.

[725] Author's translation. On the mosaic, see Dansette 2001: 74. Another brief mention of the Moses mosaic was made by Gucci; see Frescobaldi *et al.* 1948: 116.

paths and dominated by the taller summit of Hagia Aikaterinē (figure 85).[726] The vraisemblance of the sketch was minimal, each landmark (including the Monastery) being no more than a square building with windows. Its perfunctory nature would typify all depictions of Horeb before the nineteenth century and Pietro Della Valle's (Italian, 1586-1652, at Sinai 24-29 December 1615) exasperation at the inaccuracy of Pierre Belon du Mans' (French, 1518-1564, travelled in 1547, see section 4.3.2) engraving was justified.[727]

Accounts of fifteenth-century pilgrims, despite their number and extent, add little to the above picture of Horeb.[728] The detailed description of F. Fabri who

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[726] Jacques 1895: 155-302, sketch on page 235; Eckenstein 1921: 158-60; Jacopo 1950: 72-9; Vilnay 1963: XIV. On Jacopo, see Eckenstein 1921: 157; Frescobaldi *et al.* 1948: 10.

[727] Blunt 1953: 64.

[728] Fifteenth- to early sixteenth-century pilgrim accounts include (among several others): Bertrandon de la Broquière, making the Horeb visit in 1432; see Labib 1961: 51-3. Roberto da Sanseverino, lord of Caiazzo (1417-1487), a Milanese nobleman related to the Sforzas and G. Capodilista from Padova, at Sinai in 18 to 22 August 1458; see Capodilista 1966: 33, 227-32; Mitchell 1965: 143-8. Count Ulrich II of Mecklenburg-Stargard, at Horeb in autumn 1470; see Röhricht & Meisner 1880: 487-8. Ulrich Leman, in the Monastery June-July 1473; see Röhricht & Meisner 1880: 104. Sebald Rieter, Johannes Tucher and others, travelling in 1479; see Röhricht & Meisner 1880: 114, 499; Eckenstein 1921: 167. S. Brasca, travelling in 1480; see Brasca 1966: 135-9; Wolff 2003: 56. Josse van Ghistelle, visiting Horeb between 1481 and 1484; see Saint-Génois 1846: volume I, 155-92; Eckenstein 1921: 168. Bernhard von Breydenbach from Mainz (died in 1497), whose 1483 Holy Land pilgrimage account, written by Martin Roth, was the first to be printed; woodcuts by Erhard Re(u)wich of Utrecht complemented the text in the 1486 Latin and German editions and the 1488 Flemish edition; see Breidenbach *et al.* 1625: 1380; Röhricht & Meisner 1880: 129, 142-3; Davies 1911: i-xx, xxix; Eckenstein 1921: 167-8; Fontaine 1955: 60; Vilnay 1963: XIV. Other fifteenth-century printed pilgrim guidebooks were less sumptuously produced and detailed than Breydenbach's; see *Information* 1893: ix-xii, xvii-xx for a London edition; Eckenstein 1921: 168-9. Georges Lengherand (died in 1500), mayor of Mons (1477-1488), who visited Sinai between 16 and 19 October 1486, on Hagia Koryphē on the 17th; see Lengherand 1861: viii-ix, 158-66, 238-9 notes 153-8; Saint-Génois 1846: volume I, 33-4; Labib 1961: 54-60. Lengherand probably travelled together with the anonymous writer of another account in manuscript discussed by E. Morin (who had not made the identification) and generally ignored by scholars; see Morin 1862: 1-9; Labib 1961: 59. Claude Mirebel, a contemporary of Lengherand; see Saint-Génois 1846: volume I, 34-6. Wolf von Zülhhart, at the Monastery between 30 October and early November 1495; see Röhricht & Meisner 1880: 313. Prior Gregor (or Georg) of Gaming and Martin Baumgarten, visiting Horeb from 17 to 20 October 1507, ascending Hagia Koryphē on the 17th; see Breidenbach *et al.* 1625: 1381; Georgius 1721: 495-507; Röhricht & Meisner 1880: 522-3. Jean Thenaud in July 1512; see Labib 1961: 61-5. On pilgrims of the period, see Eckenstein 1921: 167-72, 167 note 2.

visited Horeb in 1483 mentioned nothing of paintings within the Hagia Koryphē chapel, which was by then dedicated to the Saviour (Sōtēr).[729] His testimony is verified by the text of the Cologne knight Arnold von Harff who visited the site between 1496 and 1499.[730] It is possible that during the fifteenth century a new chapel had been erected with a new dedication and some Greek *proskynētaria* (pilgrim guidebooks) of the sixteenth and the seventeenth century (section 4.3.3.1) mentioned a dedication to the Transfiguration (of the Saviour), which is often shortened in Greek into 'Sōtēr.' Fabri was also shown Hagioi Theodōroi as the place where Moses conversed with God in the company of Aaron and the seventy elders, a new introduction to the Horeb landscape which survives in its Arabic name, Jabal Mu'tamr ('Mount of the Conference,' sections 1.4 and 1.5.3).[731]

Pilgrims and their retinues were entertained (and sometimes housed) in the new refectory of the Monastery, a vaulted room to the south of the *katholikon*. The view that the room was originally a hostel and a Catholic chapel and only later became a refectory[732] cannot be accepted since the 1573 paintings on its eastern wall (a Last Judgement and the Hospitality of Abraham, figure 86[733]) depict standard themes in the iconography of Byzantine refectories. Pilgrims left there carved and incised graffiti of names, coats of arms and other heraldic

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[729] Fabri 1897: 558. The printed account by the Franciscan Noe Bianchi (Venice 1500) mentioned the 'low wall' and the paintings but it faithfully quoted Poggibonsi's much earlier account; see Bianchi 1500: no pagination; Bianchi 1800: 128; Eckenstein 1921: 170; Vilnay 1963: XV (with some inaccurate information).

[730] On A. von Harff, see Eckenstein 1921: 168.

[731] Fabri 1897: 597-9. *Exodus* (24:9-10):

> 'Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel.'

[732] Kraack 2001: 97.

[733] Rabino 1938: 54, 110; Weitzmann 1980: 88.

devices. Some can be attributed to known persons, like the English knight Thomas de Swinburne (November 1392), Ghillebert de Lannoy (French, 1386-1462, visited Horeb in 1401 and in 1421 or 1422)[734] or Anselme Adornes (Flemish, late August 1470).[735] Although the room is frequently referred to as 'The Crusader Refectory,' the graffiti actually date from between the fourteenth and the sixteenth century, after the end of the Crusader era.[736] They testify to the elevated social standing of western travellers. The cost of Holy Land pilgrimage was high anyway, but the Sinai diversion was very dangerous, therefore even more expensive and usually reserved for noblemen, wealthy merchants and officials.[737]

The archaeological evidence from this period at Hagia Koryphē is limited. Datable sherds are few and do not agree with the large numbers of visitors suggested by the sources. The reason for this must be the nature of items brought to the site by the pilgrims. Clay lamps must have been replaced by metallic ones, since they practically disappear from the material record. There are very few sherds of vessels datable to the late thirteenth, the fourteenth and the fifteenth century like the celadon glazed lip (late thirteenth or fourteenth century,[738] figure 87) and a few underglaze blue decorated fritwares (figure 88, number 57 datable to the fourteenth century,[739] numbers 60 and 62 datable to the fifteenth century[740]). Despite their quality, they are hardly indicative of continuous activity.[741]

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[734] Lannoy 1840: 46, 67; Saint-Génois 1846: volume I, 127-53; Lannoy 1878: xviii-xix, 68-9, 94-5; Labib 1961: 47.
[735] Adornes 1893: 168-9; Saint-Génois 1846: volume I, 30-2; Eckenstein 1921: 167.
[736] Rabino 1935: 55, 57-60; Rabino 1938: 66-79; Labib 1961: 82-3, plate VII; Kamil 1991: 30, 52.
[737] Champdor 1963: 22-25.
[738] Yumiba 1984: 67/191, 196-8, 129-30.
[739] Watson 2004: 404.

A description of a meal at the nearby summit of Hagia Aikaterinē was given by F. Fabri who visited Sinai in September 1483.[742] He was the only one of his group who carried food and shared it with the rest: four noble knights, four clerics, two escorts, their Italian-speaking guide (Father Nikodēmos from the Monastery[743]) and some Arabs:[744]

> 'After prayers we sat down, and began to burn with desire for bread and water, and each man wished that he had his basket and his bottle with him. I know not by what providential means it befell that I alone had with me a basket with biscuits, hard-boiled eggs, smoked meat, and cheese, which I had brought for myself alone, whereas the others had left all their provisions with the pilgrims who stayed down below. When they saw that I was so well provided, they congratulated me, and were angry with themselves because of their neglect, and one began to beg me for a scrap of meat, another for a crumb of bread, another for a bit of bread and cheese, and others asked me for a drink of wine. When I saw this I was amused, and gave nothing to any man, but took up my basket, and poured out all that was therein upon the hollow rock close by us, in the place where once St. Catharine's head had lain, and I thus jestingly invited the noblemen and pilgrims…' **(Text LXIV)**

Although a deeply pious friar personally devoted to Saint Catherine, Fabri did not hesitate to offer the meal in a receptacle consecrated by tradition – a fitting container. Similar meals must have been served on Hagia Koryphē without the use of any archaeologically traceable objects.

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[740] Féhérvári 2000: 251, number 313; Watson 2004: 417-25, 420-3.
[741] Material researched by the author.
[742] On F. Fabri, see section 3.3.1.
[743] Fabri 1897: 549. It was probably Nikodēmos who showed G. Lengherand around in 1486; see Lengherand 1861: 161-3.
[744] English translation in Fabri 1897: 564. For the pilgrim group, see Fabri 1897: 563, 565.

4.3. The Ottoman Period

4.3.1. An era of insecurity

Late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century accounts by western pilgrims describe the fear experienced by the monks about belligerent Bedouin keen on plunder.[745] The Franciscan monk Francesco Suriano of Venice (1450-*circa* 1529), who visited the Monastery in 1494, even mentioned the murder of bishop Makarios III by armed Arabs.[746] The reason for these unusual disturbances seems to have been the collapse of the Mamlūk administrative machine, especially in a distant and hard to control area like Sinai.[747] The warlike way of life of the monks was underlined by the existence of a well furnished armoury and two small cannons within the Monastery, attested since the later part of the century.[748]

Some of the information in pilgrimage accounts of the period was contradictory. A matter of some conjecture was the number of resident monks. Within a few decades, the Monastery was reported as thriving, deserted and thriving once more.[749] It is unlikely that such fluctuations were due to political turmoil, economic instability or actual changes in the number of monks. It is probable that the travellers compared the modest Horeb community with its populous western equivalents. It is also possible that they were avoided by monks practicing John

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[745] Sources stress the difference between the volatile attitude of the Bedouin and the consistently positive stance of Muslim authorities; see Rabino 1938: 40. On attacks, see Hobbs 1995: 155-7.
[746] Wolff 2003: 212. On F. Suriano, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 249.
[747] Labib 1961: 107.
[748] Kiechel 1866: 349; Kiechel 1972: 60; Turner 1820: 443, 445-8; Burckhardt 1822: 556; Amantos 1953: 48. In a delightful 1712 Greek engraving the Monastery is shown under attack by the Bedouin. They are throwing rocks to the monks who, nevertheless, lower through the windlass their daily offering of bread; see Athanasius 1727. A similar work is discussed in Hobbs 1995: 131-3.
[749] Grēgoriadēs 1875: 141-2; Rabino 1938: 2-3, table on page 3; Skrobucha 1966: 60, 93; Kamil

'Klimax's' ideal of *hēsychia*, stillness, silence, distancing themselves from external and disturbing agents (as heterodox visitors would be).[750] Furthermore, the fall of Constantinople in 1453, an event which most Orthodox blamed on the hatred of the 'Latin' West, would have made the monks suspicious towards western pilgrims. Finally, a visit during a festival, Lent, Easter, Christmas or the festival day of Saint Catherine (November 25), when the anchorites who lived scattered around the Monastery gathered within its walls, would create a different impression from everyday occasions, when monks concentrated on their duties.

There is another occasion which could have been interpreted by visitors as abandonment of the Monastery. The *kleismos* (closure) was a total isolation of the Sinaitic brotherhood from all outside contacts, a severe search for *hēsychia* in fasting and prayer as if the Monastery were a spiritual Noah's Ark.[751] No traveller or pilgrim seems to have been familiar with this practice,[752] however a brief *kleismos* was experienced by the writer during the first days of Lent in spring 2002.[753] The realities of modern life and pressures by the tourist police curtailed the length of this closure, but the Monastery tradition preserves stories of *kleismoi*

1991: 30, 31; Hobbs 1995: 90; Dansette 2001: 76-7; Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006: 30-1, 36-7.

[750] Dansette 2001: 80-2.

[751] Amantos 1953: 33. The *kleismos* was also a way to exert pressure on the Bedouin that depended upon the Monastery for their everyday bread and livelihood.

[752] The reference in the narrative by Hans Christoph Teufel von Krottendorf, baron of Guntersdorf and Eckhartsau (1567-1642), in the Monastery 18-23 October 1588, was unclear and may have referred to a three year-long *kleismos* due to a Bedouin attack; see Taifel 1598: 33-4; Röhricht & Meisner 1880: 546; Teufel 1972: 176. A few years earlier (1581), J. Palerne witnessed a single monk guarding the Monastery; see Palerne 1991: 146-54; on J. Palerne, see Labib 1961: 78-9. Amantos (1953: 53-4) mentioned several *kleismoi* in the seventeenth century and Periklēs Grēgoriadēs (1875: 85) added one more in 1778.

[753] In order to continue excavation work at the *phylaktērion* site, a few metres outside the eastern wall, the archaeological team had to leave the fortress through a hidden door with the aid of a monk despite the *dikaios*' orders.

continuing for years. Every noise was muted and every movement suppressed during these few days and the fortress seemed deserted indeed.

However, a total abandonment of the fortress would go against the Sinaitic mentality and would leave uncelebrated the hallowed sites of the Burning Bush and Hagia Koryphē, an unacceptable prospect. It is possible that ever since its erection in the sixth century the *katholikon* has had an uninterrupted liturgical life even when the monks' lives were in grave danger.[754] As in previous centuries, the threat originated from unruly Bedouin rather than organised militia.

Hagia Koryphē did not escape from this animosity. It seems that in the Ottoman period human intervention should be taken into account alongside natural phenomena when the disasters which befell Christian buildings have to be explained. Bedouin efforts to demolish chapels on Horeb appeared in travel records (section 4.3.2).[755] However, such outbreaks were occasional, while respect towards the summit remained constant. Until the 1770s the Bedouin never approached the place without being dressed in *iḥrām* clothing, a tradition signifying the elevated status enjoyed by the *loca sancta* of Horeb.[756]

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[754] Giorgio Gucci remarked in the account of his 1384 visit:

> 'And one must believe that out of reverence for St. Catherine and the place where God the Father gave Moses the law, and out of respect for the numberless saints that have been there, God has a love for that place, and has not permitted that that place should be uninhabited, because while these monks are there, by day and by night the name of God is named, praised, blessed and glorified, and that place is visited, which visited it would not be, if they were not there and if they did not maintain it.'

Frescobaldi *et al.* 1948: 116. English translation by Theophilus Bellorini and Eugene Hoade. It has not been possible to find the Italian original.

[755] K. Harant in 1598 mentioned Muslim pilgrims trying to destroy the Panagia tou Oikonomou chapel (section 4.1) out of spite for the miracle it commemorated; see Harant 1608: 89; Harant 1855: 74; Harant 1972: 117.

[756] Burckhardt 1822: 566-7; Eckenstein 1921: 127.

4.3.2. Western pilgrims and travellers

The adverse circumstances experienced by the monks and their guests during early Ottoman times were vividly described by the Czech nobleman Krystoff Harant who visited Horeb in October 1598 and ascended Hagia Koryphē on the 18th.[757] Upon arrival to the Monastery he was subjected in the 'Crusader Refectory' to what he perceived as a revolting gastronomic experience involving hard black bread, raw fava beans in warm water, dried Red Sea fish of a leathery consistency and white cheese tasting of soap. Conversation was offered instead of pudding.[758] Harant was an aristocrat used to the luxuries, indeed extravagances, of the Prague court of the Holy Roman emperor Rudolf II (1552-1612, ruled 1576-1611) and some excuses have to be made for his spoiled palate. However, his disgust must have been genuine. The 'archpriest,' probably the *dikaios*, in an effort to divert his elevated guests, entertained Harant and his two companions by offering them a jug of date wine which they consumed in a porcelain bowl which everyone shared:[759]

> 'The monk who took care of us brought a cup of porcelain. He added some liquor, cutting it with water, and we drank until it was all finished.' **(Text LXV)**

The mention of this vessel is remarkable, since, despite the frequent use of Chinese porcelain in Mamlūk and Ottoman Egypt, no other reference to an object

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[757] Harant 1608: 83-111; French translation in Harant 1972: 109-143; Czech simplified version in Harant 1855: 69-90 and Czech abridged version in Harant 1988: 130-8. On K. Harant, linguist, musician, refined courtier and one of the most remarkable individuals to have travelled to Sinai, see Harant 1972: 1-13; Wolff 2000: 45-58; Wolff 2003: 214-5. His travel account took ten years to complete and featured a 600-title long bibliography.

[758] Such menus are familiar to all who have dined at the refectory in modern times.

[759] Author's translation, from the French translation in Harant 1972: 113. The word '*porcellanu*' appears in italics within the gothic print text of the 1608 first edition of Harant's book; see Harant 1608: 86. Ten years earlier, on 10 June 1588, Samuel Kiechel was also offered some wine by the 'vicarius' in a cup; see Kiechel 1866: 359; Kiechel 1972: 77.

made of this material exists in Sinaitic bibliography before the twentieth century.[760] The single instance of a porcelain vessel uncovered within the Monastery walls is a sherd of Chinese blue-and-white porcelain of late Ming date,[761] such as Harant would have seen in the outstanding collection of Rudolf II in Hradčany Castle, Prague.[762] The sherd was uncovered in 1998 in the rubble from the collapsed roof of a cell near the 'Crusader Refectory' and belongs to the so-called '*kraak*' family of wares, widely exported from China in the latter part of the sixteenth century, during the rule of the Wanli emperor (1563-1620, ruled from 1572 to 1620).[763]

The trade routes allowing porcelain to reach Horeb were in place for centuries, long before the coming of the Ottomans. While standing on the summit of Hagia Aikaterinē in 1384, L. Frescobaldi noted on the Red Sea:[764]

> 'We saw in it a great number of sails. They were ships carrying spices from India; and then the caravans take them to Cairo, and on the Nile they go to Alexandria, and by other routes they go to Damascus.'

The Castilian nobleman Pero Tafur (1406/1410-*circa* 1484) encountered a caravan fifty years after Frescobaldi and a century and a half before Harant's visit (late August 1437?), most probably in Raithō. By the early fifteenth century the Red Sea port was an important trade station, protected from Bedouin attacks by

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[760] A. M. R. Dobson saw a 'beautiful large porcelain bowl' on Friday, 19 January 1923, at an era when porcelain was hardly a rarity; see Dobson 1925: 55-6. On A. M. R. Dobson, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 241-2.

[761] The sherd is awaiting publication, therefore no illustration of it could be included herein.

[762] On the collections of Schloß Ambras near Innsbruck, where Harant was educated, and the Prague Castle, where he lived, see Evans 1997: 178-8, 191-2. On Chinese pottery in the inventories of these collections, see Venturi 1885: 9; Zimmermann 1905: XXVI-XXVII, XXXIII, LII-LIII, LXII, LXV; Morávek 1937: 27; Scheicher 1997: 104-11.

[763] On similar pieces of '*kraak*' porcelain, see Rinaldi 1989: 71, decoration V and 88, figure 68 (dated to 1575-1615); Carré *et al.* 1994: 340-1 (Spanish shipwreck of 1600). On the distribution of '*kraak*' wares, see Shulsky 1998-9: 90-1, figure 7.

[764] Frescobaldi *et al.* 1948: 64. English translation by Theophilus Bellorini and Eugene Hoade; it has not been possible to find the Italian original. The Raithō port was also described by F. Fabri

guards dispatched by the Mamlūk government.[765] The Monastery profited from this trade and was reported as receiving a part of the toll paid by ships anchoring at Raithō.[766] The caravan was on its way back from 'India' (a generic term for South and Southeast Asia and the Far East) with spices, pearls, precious stones, gold, perfumes, linen, parrots, cats and the Venetian ambassador Niccolò da Conti (1395-1469). It could also have carried porcelain vessels.[767]

Excavations at Raithō have yielded Chinese sherds, some as early as the Tang dynasty (618-907), several dated to the Ming dynasty (1368-1644).[768] Similar material of a very fragmentary nature came to light at Hagia Koryphē (figure 89). However, this instance of unexpected luxury within the Monastery remains unique and all other circumstances described by the disaffected Czech were appalling.[769]

(1897: 574).

[765] Especially after the 1422-1438 rule of the sultan Barsbāy; see Hobbs 1995: 84; Dansette 2001: 68, 71.

[766] Fabri 1897: 575.

[767] Fiorentino 1550: 368v; Bracciolini 1723: 139; Tafur 1874: 92-8; Tafur 1934: 70-5; English translation in Tafur 1926: 8-9, 83-6. On P. Tafur, see Mas Latrie 1884: 283; Eckenstein 1921: 166; Vives 1938: 132-3; Kamil 1991: 30; Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 249. On the date of his Horeb visit, see Vives 1938: 157; Dansette 2001: 66 (argues for 1435).

[768] Kawatoko 1995: 54, plate 35; Kawatoko 1996: 37-8, plate 32; Kawatoko 1998: 47, plates 22-23.

[769] Other sixteenth-century travellers to Horeb include: Greffin Affagart, lord of Courteille in Normandy and Courteille in Maine, visiting Horeb in 1534; see Labib 1961: 65-70. Jodocus von Meggen, in 1542; see Röhricht & Meisner 1880: 528. The lord of Fumet, travelling with Belon du Mans in 1547; see Breidenbach *et al.* 1625: 1379. Daniel Ecklin von Aarau, in 1553; see Röhricht & Meisner 1880: 530. Emanuel Oerttel von Augsburg in 1561; see Röhricht & Meisner 1880: 532-3. Count Albrecht zu Löwenstein, baron of Scharpfeneck, at the Monastery in 17-29 November 1561 with David Furtenbach, Jacob Wurmser, Sigmund Rumpff, Georg Jaschaw and others; see Crusius 1584: 229-36; broadside print in Furtenbach 1653; Röhricht & Meisner 1880: 533-6. Christopher Fürer von Haimendorf, at the Monastery 13-16 November 1565 with Georg Beck, Alexander von Schulenburg and others; see Breidenbach *et al.* 1625: 1377; Röhricht & Meisner 1880: 536-8. Johann Hellfrich, at Horeb in February 1566; see Röhricht & Meisner 1880: 538. Ludwig von Rauter (died in 1615), at Horeb in late January-early February 1569; see Röhricht & Meisner 1880: 444, 538-9. Filippo Pigafetta, at the Monastery for two or three days after 14 February 1577; see Pigafetta 1837: 31-41. Johann Jacob Bräuning von und zu Buochenbach, travelling in 1579, at the Monastery on August 19; see Crusius 1584: 235-6; Röhricht & Meisner 1880: 541-2. During the same year, Jean le Carlier, lord of Pinon; see Labib 1961: 73-8. Adeligen Georg Christoph Fernberger von Egenberg (1557-1594), at the Monastery between 18 and 25 October 1580; see Fernberger 1999: 29-33. Solomon Schuueicker, travelling in 1581; see Crusius 1584: 527-8. Rupertus Lentulus of Dorndorff, probably travelling in 1583; see Crusius 1584: 234-5. Jacques de Valimbert, at Sinai in 1584; see

Harant died on the scaffold in Prague on 20 June 1621, a Protestant martyr punished for his belief and politics. He had joined Luther's followers in 1618, twenty years after his Holy Land tour. However, if he had embraced Protestantism earlier, he would not have attempted the journey. Martin Luther viewed the practice of pilgrimage as an unwanted consequence of the corrupt indulgencies system and opposed it vehemently. The steep drop in western pilgrim numbers to Horeb from the seventeenth century onwards must be attributed mainly to religious convictions.[770] Even Catholic believers were reluctant to travel, discouraged by Bedouin banditry and the (justified) suspicion of Ottoman authorities towards the new breed of observant and curious pilgrims who looked a lot like spies. For those attempting the journey, the shortest route was by sea, aboard ships sailing the Red Sea and anchoring at Raithō to allow for a short mountain excursion. The itinerary could continue towards the East, adding profit from trade to the blessings of pilgrimage.

However, the Red Sea trade was affected by the 1488 rounding of the Cape of Good Hope by the Portuguese and the subsequent diversion of sea routes to India and the Far East. A visit to the holy places of Horeb was no longer a brief detour from a lucrative journey but a distant destination, a dangerous endeavour undertaken by fewer and fewer travellers. George Sandys' (British, 1577-1644) account of the mountain seems derivative and he probably never made the desert

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Labib 1961: 79-82. Hans Ludwig von Lichtenstein, travelling with Wallenfels, Rotenham and Hans Ludwig von Münster, at the Monastery from 1 to 7 September 1587, on Hagia Koryphē on the 3rd; see Lichtenstein 1972: 18-20.

[770] Hobbs 1995: 221.

pilgrimage during his travels, which began in 1610.[771] The fictitious London merchant Edward Brown (in a book of his 'adventures' written by John Campbell) did not advance further than Suez in the 1670s and his interest focused on the markets and spectacles of Cairo.[772]

When the British Major Henry Rooke sailed past Raithō on April 12, 1782, he claimed to have seen 'Mount Sinai' ('Taurosina' from the Arabic *Ṭūr Sīnā'*) from his ship, something impossible, and he did not feel compelled to visit the Holy Mountain in person.[773] The mention to the Horeb holy sites and the Monastery in William George Browne's (British, 1768-1813, visited Horeb after 22 March 1793) travel narration is only a few lines long, in contrast to the detailed descriptions of pilgrims two or three centuries earlier.[774] The priorities of these merchant travellers were clearly ordered in the following passage by William Daniel, one of the few British merchants who made the Horeb trip (1701):[775]

> 'It being a venerable custome among the Greek pilgrims that come there to give five crowns [...] I presented them with forty crowns and two pair of spectacles, to pray for King William, the Honourable East India Company, myself, and relations.'

While the British focused on trade, the French excelled in diplomacy. The active role assumed by envoys of France within the Ottoman world allowed them

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[771] Sandys 1625: 905-6. On G. Sandys, see Fedden 1958: 8-10.
[772] Brown 1739. On Edward Brown's 'voyages,' see Fedden 1958: 11, 11 note 1.
[773] Rooke 1783: 71.
[774] Browne 1799: 179:

> 'On the 18th left Tûr, and on the 22d, at 3½ hours A.M. reached the monastery of Sinai. Shot a red-legged partridge. The convent is large, with a good garden, to which there is a subterraneous passage. Within the walls is a small mosque for the convenience of the Arabs. The mountain now called Sinai is high and abrupt. [...] Sinai has two summits, somewhat resembling Parnassus, another scene of inspiration...'

[775] Pitts *et al.* 1949: 82. Another British traveller who, unusually, spent some time in Sinai and followed the traditional route was Thomas Shaw (1694-1751); see Shaw 1738: 350-3. On T. Shaw, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 248.

to travel extensively, even as far as Sinai, for example Vincent Stochove (Belgian, 1605-1679), ambassador of France to the Porte, who visited Horeb between 10 and 13 October 1631 and Jean Coppin, consul in Damietta between 1643 and 1645.[776] Traders and savants followed in their footsteps.[777] From the mid-seventeenth century to Napoleon's Egyptian campaign (1798-1801, section 5.3) the accounts of the French provide the most reliable information on Sinaitic life. The monks viewed French monarchs with particular respect,[778] which was only surpassed by their fondness for the (Orthodox) tsars of Russia.[779]

The French geographer André Thevet (1516-1592) visited the site in spring 1552 and devoted more lines in his *Cosmography of the Levant* (1554) to the landscape visible from Hagia Aikaterinē than to the tradition of holy sites around Horeb.[780] His compatriot P. Belon du Mans, a famous naturalist who visited Sinai in 1547, noted that he was shown holy sites '*par le menu*' and expressed doubts on the veracity of the story ascribing to Moses the depressions in a stone at the foot of Horeb.[781] He was one of the early doubters who would multiply in later

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[776] J. Coppin spent a total of ten years in Egypt in the 1640s and wrote a description of Horeb and its environs; see Coppin 1971: 265-75, xii-xiii.

[777] From the account of the Jesuit Charles Jacques Poncet (at the Monastery of Saint Catherine for a month in 1701 on his way back from Ethiopia) it can be assumed that Horeb was a meeting place for diplomats taking the Red Sea route to East Africa, India and the Far East; see Eckenstein 1921: 180; Pitts *et al.* 1949: 163-4; Labib 1961: 101.

[778] Two copper-plate engraving portraits of Louis XIV (1638-1715, ruled 1643-1715) had adventurous lives within the Monastery walls. The first was noted in 1697 at the archbishop's apartment by A. Morison (Morison 1704: 113, on Morison, see Labib 1961: 98-100); it was again seen by C. Sicard in 1720, who was also shown the second portrait in the 'Latin chapel;' see Labib 1961: 102; Sicard 1982: 131. The second portrait was mentioned again at approximately the same time by the diplomat J. A. Van Egmont; see Van Egmont & Heyman 1759: 178; by 1906 the monks had identified the sitter of the one surviving portrait with Napoleon (Kergorlay 1911: 65); finally, in the 1930s it was spotted at the library vestibule (Rabino 1935: 69).

[779] Eckenstein 1921: 176-8.

[780] Thevet 1984: 147-8. On A. Thevet, see Labib 1961: 72-3.

[781] Belon du Mans 1970: 127, 128b. On P. Belon du Mans, see Eckenstein 1921: 175; Labib 1961:

centuries as a new mentality keen on scientific research and verifiable proof became popular in Europe (section 5.1).[782] In the meanwhile, new landmarks were added by zealous monks to the Horeb Biblical landscape, but their popularity was in general short-lived and they were recorded by few visitors.[783]

The archaeological record from Hagia Koryphē is blank as far as architecture from this period is concerned. The erection of the Hagia Triada chapel in 1934 obliterated all traces of earlier chapels (although some may survive under its floor). J. L. Burckhardt mentioned that the chapel on the summit was severely damaged in 1816 due to the continuous attempts of a Bedouin shaykh to destroy it.[784] It had been rebuilt relatively recently, after another destruction in 1782, of unknown causes.[785] Even earlier (*circa* 1588) an earthquake was responsible for the partial collapse of both the chapel and the mosque (section 4.3.3).[786] The chapel demolished by this tremor was, according to the French Jean Palerne who visited the site in 21-24 August 1581, ten or twelve *pas* long and six

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71-2; Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 240.

[782] Labib 1961: 72. The distinction between sacred tradition and scientific method was also evident in other accounts, see Palerne 1991: 152; Coppin 1971: 268; Labib 1961:96. By 1720, even a Jesuit like C. Sicard would use subtle irony when referring to Saint Catherine's relics; see Labib 1961: 102-3; Sicard 1982: 131. During a later visit (12 September - 1 October 1722) he also reported the 'camel's footprint' to have been carved by the monks in an effort to appease the Muslims; see Prefetto 1810: 242; Prefetto 1812: 283. Finally, when C. Niebuhr visited Horeb in September 1761, he did not even finish the ascent and turned back without making it to Hagia Koryphē (16 September); see Niebuhr 1776: 198-9; Niebuhr 1973: 50-1; Niebuhr 1994: 195. On C. Niebuhr, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 246-7; for a map based on his research, see Fontaine 1955: 81.

[783] For example, the place where Moses broke the tablets of the Law shown to V. Stochove, who was at Horeb with G. Fermanel, Robert Fauvel and Baudouin, lord of Launay; see Stochove *et al.* 1975: 120-1.

[784] Burckhardt 1822: 566.

[785] Sōtēriou & Sōtēriou 1958: 1.

[786] Taifel 1598: 29; Teufel 1972: 171; Kiechel 1866: 354; Kiechel 1972: 69-70.

pas wide (approximately 6.2/7.44x3.72 m).[787] Subsequent buildings were not substantially different in size, as measurements,[788] drawings, engravings and nineteenth-century photographs reveal (figures 118, 119, 120, 121, 123, 124 and 128).

Small finds were equally sparse. Infrequent visits were attested by few sherds of Kütahya ware and some European porcelain tea and coffee cups. The former were widely available throughout the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth and the eighteenth century and were used alone or sometimes inserted in metal stands (figure 90). The latter could have originated in Italian or German kilns (figures 91 and 92). Meissen in Saxony (from the mid-1710s) and Vezzi in Venice (in production 1720-1735) were known for producing cups for the Ottoman market. The cups came in small sizes, were easy to carry and came in useful for a drink of tea or coffee on site.[789]

4.3.3. Orthodox Sinai

Despite the diversion of trade routes, the insecurity of the desert and the decrease in visitor numbers, the Sinaitic clergy managed to extend its influence upon the new rulers of Egypt,[790] preserve its contact with European sovereigns (despite their heterodox views) and produce original scholarly writings. By the early sixteenth century the monks enjoyed a reputation for intellectual ability and cosmopolitanism.[791] A few years before the Ottoman conquest, in 1504, the Mamlūk sultan al-Ashraf Qansuh al-Ghawri (ruled 1501-1516) complained to pope Julius II (1443-1513, on the throne

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[787] Palerne 1991: 151.
[788] J. Coppin in the 1640s gave the dimensions of both chapels as 35 feet long by sixteen or seventeen feet wide, 11.43 x 5.22 / 5.55 m; see Coppin 1971: 270.
[789] Material researched by the author.
[790] Eckenstein 1921: 144-5.

1503-1513) about Portuguese expeditions to the Indian Ocean. To perform this delicate task, he chose as his representative a Spanish-born 'superior' from the Monastery.[792]

Sinaitic priories in Constantinople and Cairo were strategically situated near the sultan and his representative in Egypt. The Cairo priory was originally within the walls of the old city. In the early sixteenth century (probably at the time of the Ottoman conquest[793]) it was moved outside the walls to 'Tzouvania,' opposite the 1267-1269 al-Ẓāhir Baybars Mosque in the Husayniyya district.[794] It operated as the true seat of the archbishop instead of the Horeb Monastery, a choice dictated by the political necessity of having a high-ranking clergyman close to the centre of administration and by the practical need to regulate supplies to the desert community.[795]

Several decrees survive at the Monastery from the Fāṭimid, Ayyūbid, Mamlūk and Ottoman periods, the product of petitions on behalf of the monks to Egyptian authorities (sections 4.1 and 4.2.1). Some more were preserved in the Cairo and Istanbul priories and another one is in the Ägyptisches Museum in Berlin.[796] They testify to the constant effort on behalf of the Cairo monks to safeguard their desert brethren and their property from Bedouin trespassers and avaricious provincial

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[791] On Sinai monks undertaking delicate negotiations, see Skrobucha 1966: 97-8.
[792] Barros 1552: 92r-93r; Barros 1932: 291-4; Jullien 1893: 106. The presence of resident Roman Catholic monks at the Sinai Monastery has been contested (Dansette 2001: 78) and Mauro had probably been baptised Orthodox.
[793] Amantos 1953: 46.
[794] Grēgoriadēs 1875: 88-9. On the mosque and the district, see Behrens-Abouseif 2007: 121-6.
[795] Stern 1964a: 6, 41, 51, 74, 80, 100; Labib 1961: 74; *Perigraphē* 1978: 122-3; Dansette 2001: 83-4. During the Ottoman period, every time the archbishop was at the Monastery it was customary to keep the gates open and to feed and entertain the Bedouin, an added reason to reside in Cairo; see Grēgoriadēs 1875: 144; Skrobucha 1966: 86; *Perigraphē* 1978: 122.
[796] On the six Fāṭimid decrees, see Stern 1960: 439-55 and Stern 1964a; on the three Ayyūbid decrees, see Stern 1964b: 10-32; Heidemann *et al.* 1997: 81-107; Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006: 27-8, 42-5, 52; on the seventy-two Mamlūk decrees, see Stern 1966: 233-76; on Ottoman decrees, see Humbsch 1976: 186-90, 195-8, 238-47, 349-52, 413-4, 433-43, 456-65, 478-90. On early references to Sinaitic priories and grants by Muslim leaders, see Heidemann *et al.* 1997: 95;

governors. Gifts of fruit grown at the gardens of Horeb were welcomed by authorities for their symbolic connection with the 'Mount of the Law.'[797]

When Dom João de Castro (1500-1548), a Portuguese naval officer, landed on Raithō on April 21, 1541, he was told that Saint Catherine's body had been taken to Tzouvania four months ago in a 'triumphant Chariot, all gilt' to be venerated by the city's Christian population.[798] Such a well-timed expedition (after the Saint's feast day on November 25) would consolidate the Monastery's influence among Egyptian Christians and its status in the eyes of Ottoman authorities.

The Horeb Monastery remained popular with Muslim pilgrims. Although the port of Raithō lost its importance for international trade (see section 4.3.2), it became a main stop along the Red Sea route of the *ḥajj*. This is attested by Evliya Çelebi's (Ottoman, 1611-1682) mid-seventeenth-century reference to Raithō as the eighth stop from Egypt to Mecca.[799] Samuel Kiechel (German from Ulm, 1563-1619, at Horeb between 8 and 11 June 1588) mentioned many illustrious 'Turks' (Muslims) taking a few days to visit the Monastery, pray at the mosque there and ascend to Hagia Koryphē.[800] One of them had asked the monks' permission to erect a mosque in the garden of Hagioi Apostoloi. When they rejected his proposal, he petitioned the sultan in Constantinople. Although he was granted his wish, the boat he took back to Egypt sank and he perished; thus the

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Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006: 26-8. On the Berlin decree, see Heidemann *et al.* 1997: 81-2.

[797] Fabri 1897: 583, 626.

[798] Castro 1625: 1141. It seems that no Portuguese travellers attempted the Sinai pilgrimage, although a few sailed down the Gulf of Suez in the late fifteenth and the early sixteenth century; for Odoardo Barbessa's brief mention, see Barbessa 1550: 310r, 313v.

[799] Tshelebi 1980: 33.

[800] Kiechel 1866: 351; Kiechel 1972: 64-5. His Horeb visit in Kiechel 1866: 349-60; Kiechel 1972: 60-79.

holy site escaped 'desecration.'[801] Kiechel also mentioned that the damage caused to the Hagia Koryphē mosque by the 1588 earthquake (section 4.3.1) had been repaired by both 'Turks' and monks, because otherwise Muslims would pray in the Christian chapel and profane it.[802]

The inclusion of the Sinai Peninsula into the Ottoman Empire brought two major changes in Sinaitic life. The supreme political authority (the sultan) was once more – for the first time since the 630s – in Constantinople and the heretofore independent Monastery found itself within the same religious community, *millet*, and under the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Therefore, the distancing of the Sinaitic clergy from the Church of Rome must be connected with the final breach between Papacy and Orthodoxy after the fall of the Byzantine Empire.[803] However, relationships with ecclesiastical and secular authorities in European countries persisted. They included doges of Venice, French, Spanish and Hungarian kings, German emperors, Austrian archdukes and several popes,[804] responding to pleas for alms by monks travelling all over Europe and as far as the Americas.[805]

The abbots of the Monastery had borne the title of bishop since the ninth century (section 3.4) and represented the highest authority in the Peninsula. Their elevation to the title of archbishop and the achievement of autonomy cannot be

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[801] Story told by monk Daniel in the garden of Hagioi Apostoloi; see Kiechel 1866: 358; Kiechel 1972: 75-6.
[802] Kiechel 1866: 354; Kiechel 1972: 69-70.
[803] Tōmadakēs 1990: 16. Jesuit missions aiming to attract Sinai back into contact with Rome (like the one by Mario Amato in 1583) proved fruitless; see Libois 1993: 63.
[804] Grēgoriadēs 1875: 97-116; Eckenstein 1921: 148-50, 166; Amantos 1953: 38-42, 48-50, 59; Tōmadakēs 1990: 16.
[805] Labib 1961: 75.

dated with certainty but it had happened before the mid-sixteenth century.[806] The tradition of enlightened clergymen (section 3.4) continued and the fame of Symeon Pentaglossos (section 4.1.4), Grēgorios Sinaitēs (died in 1346)[807] and Philotheos Kokkinos (*circa* 1300-1379)[808] extended to Byzantium and Europe.[809]

Following in their footsteps, the seventeenth-century Cretan monk Nektarios Pelopidēs (1605-1676), later to become archbishop of Sinai (1660-1669) and patriarch of Jerusalem (1661-1669), wrote his *Epitome of Holy and Secular History* (1659-1660).[810] It was a chronicle focusing on the Monastery and using original sources, among them some of the aforementioned decrees.[811] Nektarios' work provides evidence of intellectual activity at the Monastery during the Ottoman period[812] and was the basis of much later Sinaitic literary production.[813] Its subject matter was not theological or hagiographical but historical, a choice that was conscious and political. The *Epitome* was an effort to compile an encyclopedia of Sinai, to create a compendium of the Monastery's living memory, to produce a document of Sinaitic identity.

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[806] Rabino 1938: 4; Amantos 1953: 49; Tōmadakēs 1990: 14; Dansette 2001: 77.
[807] Skrobucha 1966: 43-7.
[808] He later became patriarch of Constantinople (1353-1355, 1364-1376).
[809] Grēgoriadēs 1875: 76-8; Amantos 1953: 44-6.
[810] Nektarios 1980 (first published in 1677). On Nektarios, see Popescu-Belis 2001: 117-8; Popescu-Belis & Mouton 2006: 193.
[811] Stern 1960: 439-43; Stern 1964a: 5-6.
[812] Popescu-Belis & Mouton 2006: 190.
[813] Popescu-Belis & Mouton 2006: 192-5.

4.3.3.1. Greek pilgrim guidebooks: the *proskynētaria*

It is from the sixteenth and the seventeenth century that most Greek manuscripts with pilgrim guides or narrations (*proskynētaria*) date.[814] They testify to a long tradition which was rarely recorded in text. Contrary to pilgrims from the West, Orthodox travellers gave precedence in their narratives to the Mosaic tradition centred around Hagia Koryphē rather than to the cult of Saint Catherine, although they venerated her relics, too.

All these accounts focused on Hagia Koryphē and mentioned landmarks familiar from pilgrim accounts already discussed (sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.3): the steps of route A (their count varied considerably: 3,600,[815] 6,000,[816] 6,600,[817] 7,000,[818] 10,000,[819] see sections 3.1.5 and 4.2.2[820]), the chapel dedicated to Moses[821] or to the Transfiguration,[822] cave B,[823] cave A[824] and the chapel of Archangel Michael.[825] Unusually, two sixteenth-century manuscripts recorded a third chapel dedicated to Moses and Aaron[826] and one *proskynētarion* added a chapel of Saint Marina.[827] However, according to all other texts the chapel of

[814] Ten of them, dating from the sixteenth and the seventeenth century, have been published in *Proskynētaria* 2003. They are all anonymous save the one by Paisios of Rhodes.
[815] *Proskynētaria* 2003: 139.
[816] *Proskynētaria* 2003: 146.
[817] *Proskynētaria* 2003: 89, 143.
[818] *Proskynētaria* 2003: 72.
[819] *Proskynētaria* 2003: 80, 97, 112, 123.
[820] Skrobucha 1966: 80.
[821] *Proskynētaria* 2003: 80, 112.
[822] *Proskynētaria* 2003: 89, 124, 143.
[823] *Proskynētaria* 2003: 72, 80, 89, 113, 143, 146.
[824] *Proskynētaria* 2003: 89, 143.
[825] *Proskynētaria* 2003: 72, 80, 89, 98, 113, 143.
[826] *Proskynētaria* 2003: 89, 143.
[827] *Proskynētaria* 2003: 143.

Saint Marina was in the Prophētēs Hēlias valley, so the one of Moses and Aaron may have been below Hagia Koryphē, too.

The founder of the main Hagia Koryphē chapel (the one dedicated to Moses or the Transfiguration) was mentioned in several of the manuscripts as being Germanos, patriarch of Jerusalem, and the erection date was always placed 335 years earlier.[828] However, given that the manuscripts dated between the early sixteenth and the mid-seventeenth century and the original texts are very hard to pinpoint chronologically, the foundation date of the chapel in question is impossible to discover. One sixteenth-century manuscript mentioned the erection of the summit basilica by Justinian, adding it had been destroyed by the time of its writing.[829]

The most original of these accounts was written between 1577 and 1592 by Paisios, a Sinai monk originating from Zakynthos, who was made a bishop (metropolitan) of Rhodes.[830] In charming colloquial decapentasyllabic verse he described in detail the Monastery, Horeb and its landmarks. His Hagia Koryphē description was the most accurate of any *proskynētarion.* The chapel of the (Transfiguration of the) Saviour was to the right of cave B, which in its turn was to the right of the chapel of Archangel Michael.[831] To their west was the mosque and under it a cistern, used by pilgrims for refreshment.[832]

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[828] *Proskynētaria* 2003: 77, 98, 109-10, 124.
[829] *Proskynētaria* 2003: 139.
[830] Paisios 1978: 59-60; *Proskynētaria* 2003: 60-67, 151-221.
[831] *Proskynētaria* 2003: 153.
[832] *Proskynētaria* 2003: 154.

His text was used by another Paisios (died *circa* 1768), former bishop (metropolitan) of Paramythia and Vouthrōton (1750-1754).[833] The latter Paisios never made the Sinai pilgrimage but used available sources (Paisios of Rhodes, Nektarios, the *Perigraphē*, see section 4.2.1) to compose a 'description in rime.'[834] The value of his text and the other *proskynētaria* lies less in their accuracy and more in their gathering of traditions, of the Monastery's collective memory.

4.4. Conclusion

By the early seventh century Hagia Koryphē had already experienced more than three centuries of recorded history. It had been identified as the centrepiece of the Old Testament's most revered sacred landscape on which miracle-working ascetics had added a further layer of sanctity. It had witnessed two main building phases, one of them imperially-funded and of impressive proportions. It had become the destination of clerics and pilgrims from around Christianity who were serviced by extensive facilities and protected by a dedicated guard. Another glorious church had been built within a strong fortress at its foot. The once peripheral refuge of persecuted martyrs had become a major pilgrimage and an important monastic centre.

What the twelve centuries that followed had to add was the feat of survival. Through cultural change, religious fanaticism, political turmoil, armed aggression and lengthy isolation the religious community of Horeb continued to inhabit their fortified refuge and worship in their hallowed locations. They managed to

[833] Paisios 1978: 30-41.
[834] Paisios 1978: 109-10.

overcome adversities because they shared an identity as custodians of the 'Mount of the Law,' as followers in the steps of Moses, Elijah and the desert fathers. This strong Sinaitic identity, already made manifest in the Early Christian period (section 3.5), relied on faith, adaptability, tolerance and tradition.

During the first centuries of the Islamic era the economy of the Sinai Peninsula reverted to nomadism and its urban centres disappeared. The Monastery at the foot of Hagia Koryphē developed into the only constant in the region,[835] an agent of stability among unruly populations (section 4.1). This political power was used in later centuries to ensure the survival of the community but it also burdened it with juridical duties which sometimes attracted the animosity of disaffected parties (section 4.3.1). Repeated instances of Bedouin aggression were probably due to such political crises and the violent conversion of the lay population to Islam *circa* 700 must have been such a local phenomenon (section 4.1.2).

Sinaitic diplomacy excelled in handling heterodox elites. The few threats on the behalf of Muslim authorities mentioned in section 4.2.1 (the onslaught of al-Ḥākim's demolition troops in 1009) or violent incidents (the Mamlūk plundering of 1401, the Tzouvania occupation of 1653) had been contained through continuous petitions, building of mosques and welcoming both friends and enemies outside the Monastery walls, with open arms full of precious gifts.[836]

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[835] Mouton 2001b: 198-9, 206. The enumeration of all Bedouin tribes and their affiliations over two pages in the relatively brief *Perigraphē* testifies not to ethnographic curiosity but to the knowledge of (and control over) the Sinai Bedouin by the Monastery; see *Perigraphē* 1978: 114-5. See also Hobbs 1995: 158.

[836] This is probably the reason why the treasury of the Monastery is so poor in liturgical objects made of precious metals; see Weitzmann 1980: 158.

However, the coexistence with Egypt's Fāṭimid, Ayyūbid, Mamlūk and Ottoman rulers was peaceful most of the time. They wished to control the monks' influence on the Bedouin population and in return granted them protection, enlarged their revenue and bestowed upon their desert seat buildings and works of art (section 4.2.1). The impressive bronze '*aquamanile*' vessel in the shape of a raptor (figure 93), traditionally dated to the eleventh or the twelfth century but probably of late ᶜAbbāsid manufacture,[837] could have arrived at the Monastery as such a princely gift.[838] The buildings and furnishings mentioned in the eleventh-century *kursi* inscription and the 1106 *minbar* were also gifts from powerful figures. Beyond political motivations, genuine reverence for the Old Testament landmarks like Hagia Koryphē must have inspired Muslim patrons and visiting rulers sensitive to the tradition of the prophet Moses and to allusions in the Qur'ān (section 4.1).[839]

Such reverence was deeply rooted even among the Bedouin and their example was followed by anonymous pilgrims on the *ḥajj* or on *ziyāra(t)*. Johannes Ægidius Van Egmont (Dutch, 1697-1747, visited Horeb *circa* 1720) described within the Hagia Koryphē mosque 'small pieces of cloth, linen handkerchiefs, hair bound up in linen rags, and the like,'[840] humble tokens of devotion which could be linked to the inscriptions found *in situ* (section 4.2.1). Carsten Niebuhr (Danish, 1733-1815) noted on September 16, 1761 that his Muslim guides prayed at the chapels of the Prophētēs Hēlias plateau and even kissed the images (icons), imitating the Christian

[837] Weitzmann 1980: 159; Ettinghausen & Grabar 1987: 198, figure 187.
[838] It would have been used as a *chernivoxeston* (water jug) during service.
[839] Richards 2001: 150.
[840] Van Egmont & Heyman 1759: 168.

pilgrims they escorted.[841] A less solemn sign of respect was the Bedouin practice of becoming impregnated on Hagia Koryphē (probably cave A) owing to the belief that 'children who are conceived here will be endowed with a holy and prophetic spirit' **(Text LXVI)**,[842] as witnessed by prior Gregor (or Georg) of Gaming on the night of the 17th of October 1507.[843]

The Horeb brethren were able to accommodate Muslim devotion within Christian landmarks, thereby demonstrating both adaptability and tolerance. In this way they ensured the prosperity of their community and its continued existence. The early eleventh century was the moment in Sinaitic history when its strongest ties with both 'Latin' West and Muslim East were forged. After escaping al-Ḥākim's threat, the Monastery managed to shield itself against further aggression with mosques strategically placed within its walls, on Hagia Koryphē and probably on two further locations, offerings of a Fāṭimid official. At the same time a gifted monk, Symeon Pentaglossos, toured Western Europe endowing pieces of Saint Catherine's incorruptible, oil-oozing body in return for alms and property.

The success of Symeon's mission (and several later ones) consolidated Saint Catherine's fame and ensured a stream of pilgrims and revenue for five centuries. Once again, dedicated devotional structures, the 'Latin' chapels of Saint Catherine within the Monastery and the Archangel Michael (or the Ascension) at Hagia Koryphē serviced but also contained heterodox piety. For some pilgrims the grace of the virgin Saint obscured even the glory of the Mosaic association. For most,

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[841] Niebuhr 1776: 198-9; Niebuhr 1973: 51; Niebuhr 1994: 195. On Bedouin worship in Christian places, see Hobbs 1995: 162-4.
[842] Translated in Skrobucha 1966: 80.

the two traditions merged as was manifested in the localisation of the Saint's *inventio* not on the summit of Hagia Aikaterinē, where the Monastery tradition must have always placed it, but on 'Mount Sinai,' Hagia Koryphē. During the October 1433 pilgrimage of Philipp, count of Katzenellenbogen, several noblemen were dubbed 'Knights of Saint Catherine' at the Hagia Koryphē chapel rather than at her sepulchre within the Monastery.[844] Finally, some accounts mentioned manna oozing from her body rather than oil, bringing together the narrative of *Exodus* with the fourth-century Saint from Alexandria.[845]

The early sixteenth century was another turning point. The Byzantine Empire, the reference for all Orthodox clergy irrespective of geographical distance, had collapsed and the age of discovery had opened new seafaring routes for international trade which diverted visitors. Egypt was the province of a large empire and a new way of practising religion reduced the attraction of pilgrimage in Europe.[846] The Monastery of Saint Catherine seemed isolated and abandoned to the plundering of the Bedouin, but 'defended itself successfully against all the surrounding tribes by the peculiar arms of its possessors, patience, meekness and money.'[847] This was the time when the priories of the Monastery reached their wider distribution (sections 4.3.3 and 5.3). These satellite institutions influenced centres of power and channelled revenue and information back to the desert,

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[843] Eckenstein 1921: 127-8; Hobbs 1995: 169.
[844] Röhricht & Meisner 1880: 472; Katzenellenbogen 1882: 355; Kraack 2001: 90, 90 note 11.
[845] Frescobaldi *et al.* 1948: 58 (for Frescobaldi), 197 (for Sigoli).
[846] Visitor numbers by the early nineteenth century had dwindled to sixty or eighty per year; see Burckhardt 1822: 485, 552, 586.
[847] Burckhardt 1822: 547.

creating a life-giving network which extended beyond the South Sinai.[848] It was an era of introspection and resilience strengthened by faith.

The writing of the *Epitomē* by Nektarios in 1659-1660 (section 4.3.3) was the unexpected culmination of this period. The book collated historical testimony from the Monastery's library, documents from its archive and, more importantly, its oral memory. This communal memory, harking back to the third-century desert fathers, was the heart of Sinaitic identity. For the monks, their history had begun in the time of Moses, long before their ascetic predecessors arrived at South Sinai. Their tradition connected them with the book of *Exodus* and a supreme moment of the Old Testament narrative, the giving of the Law at Hagia Koryphē. In this way, the 'Mount of the Law' was the root of their tradition, the seal of their uniqueness.

By the early nineteenth century Hagia Koryphē had reverted back to its humble Early Christian appearance. The magnificent basilica and even the painted chapel had disappeared. The memory of the basilica's splendour survived in monastic lore and its ruins were incorporated in subsequent structures. In 1999, during the excavation of the southern exterior staircase of the narthex (figure 53), a hoard of approximately 600 *tesserae* from the mosaic decoration came to light. The minute pieces of glass and stone had been carefully collected and had been buried under the paving of the mosque's entrance way. It was a cache of memory reverentially deposited at a new structure's foundation, a symbol of continuity at a place where even debris assumed a guise of sanctity.

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[848] In December 1701, W. Daniel referred to the Greek 'Patriark' (the archbishop or the *dikaios*) showing him an Italian 'gazet' for European news – although he did not specify how old the newspaper was; see Pitts *et al.* 1949: 80.

Traditions proved more resilient than buildings and Hagia Koryphē continued to perform the role of an *avaton* offering protection. When the local lay population fled conversion to Islam and when the monks decided to abandon Horeb, Hagia Koryphē was their place of refuge and prayer (section 4.1.2 and 4.1). When the troops of Ibn Ghiyāth approached, set on destroying the Monastery, Hagia Koryphē erupted (section 4.2.1). When in the sixteenth century (*circa* 1579) plague struck Egypt, a pair of cells above Prophētēs Hēlias offered shelter from contamination.[849]

Another miracle, mentioned in the *Epitome* of Nektarios, set Hagia Koryphē within its traditional metaphysical framework:[850]

> '...if someone stands on this summit in the evening, when the sun sets, he can see on the peak, not of the mountain but of its shadow, a light, like the one said to appear on the summit in the Holy Scriptures, when God descended in glory, and fire and darkness, and talked to Moses.' **(Text LXVII)**

The ancient prohibition against spending the night on the summit was still observed when Georg Christoff von Neitzschitz visited on 7 July 1636.[851] However, Antoine Morison slept there on the night of 23 November 1697 because he was too tired to descend. He was joined by fellow travellers and monks from the Monastery and they all celebrated mass the next morning, presumably in the respective Orthodox and Catholic chapels rather than Saint Peter's in Rome (like the *paramonarios* in Anastasios' narration had done, see section 2.4.6).[852]

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[849] Labib 1961: 77. No traces of these cells survive. This may have been the place the patriarch of Alexandria chose as his asylum, as mentioned in Affagart's account of his 1534 pilgrimage; see Labib 1961: 69-70. However, the presence of this particular patriarch (Iōakeim 'of Athens,' 1487-1567) was probably due to his wish to intervene in Sinaitic ecclesiastical politics rather than to his fear of the plague; see Amantos 1953: 46-7; Skrobucha 1966: 94-5.
[850] Author's translation.
[851] Neitzschitz 1666: 211-2; Neitzschitz 1674: 170-1. On G. C. von Neitzschitz, see Eckenstein 1921: 178.
[852] Morison 1704: 97.

Hagia Koryphē, a landscape alive with Biblical stories, was the cornerstone of Sinaitic identity, the main point of reference for the monastic community through adversity and change. On the one hand, it was immutable, still invested with a concrete set of qualities formulated in the pre-Justinianic period: sacredness, preeminence over other sacred places, protection and limited accessibility (section 2.5). On the other hand, it evolved as centuries progressed with the accumulation of new layers of meaning: it became an imperially-inspired pilgrimage site (section 3.5), an interreligious devotional destination and an all-embracing holy place accommodating pilgrims, buildings, relics and miracles.

5. OBJECT OF ENQUIRY

> 'It is good to know the truth and to speak the truth. But it is better to know the truth and to speak about palm trees.'
>
> Freya Stark quoted by G. W. Murray in 'The Land of Sinai,' *The Geographical Journal* CXIX: 2 (June 1953), 143.

By the end of the twelfth century a complex and unique set of qualities had come to be assigned to Hagia Koryphē. It was the crown of the sacred landscape of Horeb, which included among other sites the Monastery with the relics of Saint Catherine and the Burning Bush, the cave of the prophet Elijah (Prophētēs Hēlias), other landmarks connected with Moses and the summit of Hagia Aikaterinē where the body of the virgin Saint from Alexandria had miraculously been discovered two centuries earlier. It had become the focal point of an anchoretic community and, later on, of a thriving monastic society. It had been graced with Justinian's buildings and also with the patronage of rulers and high-ranking officials of the Fāṭimid state. It had suffered political tribulations after the advent of Islam and the onslaught of the Crusaders and had survived as a pilgrimage destination for Christians from both sides of the schism and Muslims alike. Even Jews had included it in their itineraries. In short, the majority of Hagia Koryphē's characteristics had crystallised within the first millennium of its recorded history. However, there remained a last chapter to be written, one that can only be followed through the scholarly and travel literature devoted to the site and produced in abundance during the nineteenth century.

This chapter will focus on works by writers from the British Isles, France, German-speaking countries and the United States of America from 1822 to the beginning of World War I in 1914. The former date saw the posthumous publication of J. L. Burckhardt's *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land* (figure 94), the first book to question briefly the attribution of Hagia Koryphē as the Biblical Mount Sinai on the basis of the writer's interpretation of archaeological remains and topographical features (sections 5.2, 5.2.1 and 5.2.3).[853] The storm of activity which ensued is remarkable. Hundreds of books and articles but also paintings, engravings and photographs (section 5.5) were produced, fiercely arguing for or against contestants for the title of the 'Mount of the Law.' The controversy inspired the first large-scale Ordnance Survey mapping project outside British soil, the 1868-1869 *Ordnance Survey of the Peninsula of Sinai*, published in 1871 (sections 1.5.1 and 5.2.4).[854] The conclusion of this expedition in favour of Hagia Koryphē satisfied most researchers and tourists (section 5.6). However, to this day many scholars seek alternative Mount Sinais in the peninsula, Negev or Arabia (section 2.2) – although their efforts fall outside the scope of this thesis.

There are further issues beyond the endless and at times bizarre arguments on whether Hagia Koryphē or some other hill or mountain was the site of the Delivery and Proclamation of the Law. Imperialist aspirations funded the German, French and British missions which mapped the peninsula and were followed by economic penetration into the weakening Ottoman Empire and the eventual annexation of

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[853] Burckhardt 1822: 488-596; Horeb visits on 1 and 18-30 May 1816.
[854] The 1864-1865 Ordnance Survey of Jerusalem, also coordinated by C. W. Wilson, was relatively modest in scope.

Egypt by the British in 1882. This turn of events seemed inevitable to the handful of European nations which managed to control in one way or the other three quarters of the earth's surface by the late nineteenth century (section 5.1.2).

Apart from political and economic supremacy, religious fervour of a distinctly Protestant flavour affected the experience of the majority of the pious scholars and visitors to Sinai who recorded their adventures in print. Their attitude was founded on their certainty about the literal truth of the Bible, which often reached the level of Bibliolatry, their rejection of ecclesiastical tradition and their militantly anti-monastic feelings. Only the scriptures could justify the attribution of a Biblical site and only rigorous and systematic enquiry of a (preferably) scientific nature would prove it. As will be discussed in section 5.1.2, the accounts by visiting Roman Catholic priests and travellers did not share the condescending tone of the British, American and German Protestants in their description of the monks of the Monastery and their 'superstitions.'

The self-referential character of this attitude will be made manifest when the history of Horeb in the nineteenth century is examined from two different points of view hereto largely ignored in western scholarship. Firstly, there was the monastic community itself, closely connected with Orthodox Christianity in the Balkans, Russia and the Near and Middle East. The 'isolated' and 'ignorant' monks coordinated a network of priories which by the eighteenth century stretched as far as India (sections 4.3.3 and 5.3). Secondly, there was the view of Orthodox, mostly Russian, scholars who first recognised the importance of the Monastery's art treasures (section 5.4). Together with thousands of anonymous pilgrims, they continued

to revere Hagia Koryphē and produced a groundbreaking body of literature which remained ignored in Europe and America until the twentieth century.

Between the second and last quarters of the nineteenth century the holy summit of Horeb would be measured, described, sketched and photographed but also questioned and dismissed to an extent that remains unmatched in previous or subsequent years. The amount of information available in print was such that respected scholars could produce volume-long essays on the topography, morphology and climate of the site and large maps without ever having been there (section 5.7).[855] However, in the twentieth century scholarly attention shifted towards a more critical approach to the text of the Bible itself, its sources and formative process.[856] Furthermore, by the end of World War I, the importance of the library, icon collection and mosaics of the Monastery was acknowledged in the western academic world (section 5.4). Until the 1990s, no scholar would contemplate the summit of the mountain or the remains on it. During the twentieth century the pattern of visitation which was established by the late Middle Ages, with prayer, adventure or curiosity as its motivations, was resumed.

5.1. 'The Age of Enlightenment'

In comparison with the pilgrim traffic to Hagia Koryphē down to the sixteenth century (section 4.2), the following two centuries appear quiet. If it was not for

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[855] Ritter 1848; Knobel 1857: 187-95; Kiepert 1859; Altmüller 1861.

[856] For an analysis of the various literary strata in Pentateuch texts relating to Mount Sinai, see Vaux 1978a: 393-452. For a discussion of theories on the traditions and events of the Exodus, see Nicholson 1973; Aharoni 1961: 170. For an interesting approach to Bedouin lifestyles in relation to the testimony on Israelites in the Bible, see Meshel 1982. For the meaning of the Mount Sinai theophany, see Niehaus

the activity of Orthodox clergy connected to the Monastery[857] and for the grandeur of works of art like the painted and gilt wooden screen with its gigantic icons erected in 1612 in the *katholikon* (figure 95),[858] one could claim that this was a period of decline. From the point of view of European visitor traffic, this was actually the case. Numbers dwindled, a change made even more noticeable if compared to the rise of long-distance travel and geographical scholarship in seventeenth-century Europe.

It was an era of encyclopaedic collections of past pilgrims' narrations rather than contemporary pilgrimage. The 1584 compilations by the Frankfurt publisher-printer Sigmund Feyerabend (1528-1590, figure 96) and the Tübingen professor Martinus Crusius (1526-1607) and the works of Richard Hakluyt (British, 1552/3-1616, published from 1582), Samuel Purchas (British, 1575-1626, published from 1613) base their information on earlier first-hand accounts rather than actual experience of the places themselves.[859] Even the Italian Franciscan monk Franciscus Quaresmius (1583-1650), a celebrated scholar who had lived in Jerusalem, had visited Sinai himself and published his work in 1639, was more interested in collating older information than adding new.[860] Two of the decisive events which shook Europe during the fifteenth and the sixteenth century and

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1995. For the probable traditions merging in the *Exodus* story, see Briend 2003: 2053-8.

[857] Amantos 1953: 46-69.

[858] The screen was the work of Maximos; see Rabino 1935: 28, 82; Sōtēriou & Sōtēriou 1958: 4; Skrobucha 1966: 87.

[859] Feyerabend 1584: numerous references; Crusius 1584: 229-36, 261-3, 527-8. See also the following accounts in Purchas: Breidenbach *et al.* 1625: 1377, 1379-81; Castro 1625: 1141; Sandys 1625: 905-6; on the Sinai accounts in Purchas, see Beckingham 1997: 226-7. Early compilations of travel and pilgrimage literature, two categories that became increasingly indistinguishable, include those by Giovanni Battista Ramusio (see Fiorentino 1550) and João de Barros (see Barros 1552, reprinted in Barros 1932).

shaped the modern world, the opening of new sea routes towards West and East and the Reformation of the Roman Catholic Church from 1517 onwards, had decisively reduced the attraction of the Holy Land and Mount Sinai for scholars and believers.[861] When their interest was renewed, it was on a level markedly different from that of medieval pilgrimage.

5.1.1. Sinaitic inscriptions

The first wave of scholarly enthusiasm for South Sinai was associated with the so-called 'Sinaitic' inscriptions. In 1636, the alchemist and scholar Athanasius Kircher (German, 1601-1680, figure 97) identified one of them as Hebrew. It had been transcribed a few years earlier (between 1612 and 1632) by the Franciscan Tommaso Obicini (Italian, 1585-1632) in Wādī al-Lajā'.[862] However, only in 1747, when Robert Clayton [Irish, 1695-1758, the Lord Bishop of Clogher (1745-1758) for the Church of Ireland],[863] inspired by R. Pococke's (figure 98) travel account,[864] urged the London Society of Antiquaries to organise a mission to

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[860] Quaresmius 1639: 438, 954-9, 985, 992-6, 1001-5.
[861] Saint-Génois 1846: volume I, 37-8; Turner & Turner 1978: xviii, 201.
[862] Kircher 1636: 204-19. On T. Obicini in the Holy Land, see Bottini 1995: 98, 101. He may have actually come second, because the inscription was noted in P. Della Valle's account of a 1615 visit; see Blunt 1953: 67-8. The same stone was mentioned in Morison 1704: 104-5 and Van Egmont & Heyman 1759: 176. In 1647 B. de Monconys tried to transcribe some more of these mysterious inscriptions to take to Kircher in Rome but was prevented by the ill humour of his camel guides; see Monconys 1973: 28-9, 108-9.
[863] On R. Clayton, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 241.
[864] Pococke 1814 (first published in 1743): 284, 289. On R. Pococke, see Eckenstein 1921: 181; Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 248. His account was often quoted; see Conder 1830: 136-202; Thompson *et al.* 1977 (first published in 1850): 435-50. Pococke was aware of Kircher's mention of an inscription and mentioned more:

> 'There are on many of the rocks, both near these mountains and in the road, a great number of inscriptions in an ancient character; many of them I copied, and observed that most of them were not cut but stained, making the granite of a lighter colour, and where the stone had scaled, I could see the stain had sunk into the stone.'

record these inscriptions and offered a substantial amount to this end,[865] did the scholarly community focus on the Sinaitic 'Hebrew characters.'[866] Missions were dispatched to transcribe as many inscriptions as possible and debated fervently as to their authorship, date and decipherment (for their conclusions, see section 2.1).[867] By the mid-nineteenth century, the Sinai Peninsula was 'a place to be explored, included among the most essential *DESIDERATA* of archaeology' **(text LXVIII)** for the Institut National de France,[868] and their enthusiasm was shared by other European scholarly bodies and learned societies. Despite having been correctly identified as Nabatean as early as 1840 by Eduard Friedrich Ferdinand Beer (German, 1805-1841), Sinaitic inscriptions continued to be attributed to the caravan of the Jews fleeing from Egypt or to Early Christian Arabs.[869]

Most passionate among Beer's opponents was the Reverend Charles Forster, Rector of Stisted (British, died 1871, figure 99), who between 1851 and 1865 published a series of books, pamphlets and articles supporting his theory that the

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[865] Five hundred pounds; see Grēgoriadēs 1875: 137 note.
[866] Prefetto 1810: 217-8; Prefetto 1812: 253-5.
[867] Eckenstein 1921: 89. An early mission, the scope of which included research on the inscriptions, was organised under the protection of the Danish king Frederick V (1723-1766, ruled 1746-1766) and with the general guidance of the scholar Johann Michaelis (1717-1791). The only person to survive it and record his experiences was C. Niebuhr; see Niebuhr 1994: i-v.
[868] Author's translation after Lottin de Laval 1855-9a: 1-31. On Lottin de Laval, see Labib 1961: 130-1.
[869] The bibliography on Sinaitic inscriptions is extensive and recent works make exhaustive references unnecessary, since the subject lies besides the point of this thesis. Selected works representing the evolvement of Sinaitic epigraphology follow: The results of the *Ordnance Survey* were discussed in Palmer 1878: 106-19; Palmer 1892: 114-27. Julius Euting offered a substantial contribution of inscriptions from the Horeb area; see Euting 1891: 5-11, plate 2-4. The first *corpus* appeared in *CIS* 1907: 152-72 (for Horeb). Lina Eckenstein's (1921: 87-90) review of earlier literature and J. Cantineau's seminal research on the Nabatean language remain useful; see Cantineau 1930: 22-5; Cantineau 1932: 47-8. The latest addition to the *corpora* appeared in Stone 1992b: 85-97, 99 (for Nabatean inscriptions). However, the locality 'Jebel Musa' in this work did not refer to Hagia Koryphē or even to Horeb, as comparison with *CIS* 1907 revealed. For a recent review of research, see Taylor 2001: 148-51; for a discussion of the content of inscriptions, see Briend 2003: 1991-9.

inscriptions were alphabetical and Hebrew in origin.[870] His essays included concordance tables of characters and even exercises that studious readers could do to gain proficiency in his proposed language system.[871] Whenever the alphabetical characters did not suffice to support his translations,[872] he interpreted some of them as hieroglyphs,[873] while he preferred to consider Egyptian hieroglyphs as pictorial alphabetical characters.[874]

In the third volume of his *The One Primeval Language Traced Experimentally Through Ancient Inscriptions in Alphabetic Characters of Lost Powers from the Four Continents*, he went on to include all 'post-diluvian' dialects in a master linguistic scheme with the aim to trace the 'primeval ante-diluvian' language through them. He concluded by tracing the remains of the lost ten tribes of Israel all over central Asia: "The fact of their existence, indeed, stands certified by 'the sure word of prophecy'."[875] His 1860 contribution *A Harmony of Primeval Alphabets* incorporated characters from the ruins of Palmyra, Central America and Axum in Ethiopia.[876]

What is surprising is not the eccentricity of his views, which were vehemently rejected by most contemporary authorities,[877] but the fact that his *Sinai Photographed or Contemporary Records of Israel in the Wilderness*, a

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[870] Forster first expressed an interest in all things Sinaitic in his two-volume, 866-page long diatribe on *The Historical Geography of Arabia*, which he never visited, see Forster 1844.
[871] Forster 1851: plate VII, opposite page 163; Forster 1852: plate XV.
[872] His translations include the following: 'Pilgrimizing the Hebrews / Commit sin at Marah' and 'The People commit adultery congregated in the desert,' see Forster 1862: 233, 241.
[873] Forster 1851: plate IV, opposite page 95.
[874] Forster 1852: 11-5, plate I opposite page 46.
[875] Forster 1854: 238-343, quote from page 237.
[876] Forster 1860.
[877] Forster 1856.

sumptuous 1862 edition with several photographic plates, was supported by a long list of influential and high-ranking subscribers.[878] Reverend Forster also participated in the 'Mount of the Law controversy' discussed in section 5.2, supporting Jabal Sirbāl as the best candidate for the 'Mount of the Law.'[879] This controversy would engage the intellect of nineteenth-century scholars to a larger extent than Sinaitic inscriptions.

5.1.2. Questioning Sinai: the 'Mount of the Law controversy'

The popularity of Biblical scholarship in Britain, Germany and the United States of America was a major factor for the second resurgence of Sinaitic studies from the 1820s onwards. It was a time when sermons and theology pamphlets became best-sellers, circulating widely and read by a large part of the literate middle classes.[880] The Methodist and later on the Evangelical movements had impressed upon a willing audience the fundamental principles of Protestant Christianity, namely the predominance of the study of the Bible combined with the rejection of ecclesiastical tradition ('Bible Alone,' *Sola Scriptura*) and the ability of any lay student of the scriptures to come to definitive conclusions on matters of Biblical exegesis ('Priesthood of All Believers').

Fervent preachers advocated the private and group study of the Bible beyond the confines of the established Church and encouraged bold travellers to stray outside the set paths of pilgrimage, unaltered since the Early Christian

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[878] Forster 1862: v-vii.
[879] Forster 1865: 171-222.
[880] Somervell 1957: 101-2; Moscrop 2000: 2.

period, and to seek fresh evidence. The premise was that only first-hand experience of sacred places and empirical examination of the parameters of the Old Testament narrative would allow for a faithful reconstruction of the scriptural landscapes.[881] New Testament sites (for example the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem or the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem), identified since the Early Christian centuries with plausible accuracy, were under the hold of non-Protestant Christian Church authorities, either Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Syriac or Armenian. However, the identification of Old Testament sites was vague and based only on later traditions which were easier to refute if the reading of the Bible allowed it.[882] In Stephen Olin's words (American, 1797-1851, visited Horeb 13-18 March 1840, ascended Hagia Koryphē on the 14th):[883]

> 'the Bible... was always at hand, and it certainly proved the most useful as well as the most interesting book that can be taken by the traveller upon this route.'

Olin joined many travellers who roamed Horeb as if no one had ever been there before them. He proclaimed the presence of a chapel below Hagia Zōnē as adequate supporting evidence for the identification of this summit with the scriptural Mount Sinai, ignoring the thousands who had visited and worshipped in it before and after him.[884] (On Hagia Zōnē as a 'Mount of the Law' candidate, see section 5.2.2.) The potential clarification of the route of the Exodus and the discovery of its remains caught the educated public's imagination. Could there be more godly inspiration hidden in the inaccessible wilderness? Could the Decalogue

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[881] Moscrop 2000: 13-6. On the particularly empirical streak of nineteenth-century British thinking, see Chambers 1993: 149-50. On the experiential belief of American Protestants, see Davis 1996: 36.
[882] Moscrop 2000: 2.
[883] Olin 1843: 383. On S. Olin, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 247.

be verified by archaeological and philological discoveries? The gain from deciphering the ancient riddle would be personal salvation and the justification of the individual before God, according to the principle of 'Faith Alone' (*Sola Fide*).

In doubting the traditional localities of the Old Testament events and seeking new ones, Protestant believers were probably treading down a path already taken by other Christian sects before them. It is possible that in the fifth and the sixth century non-Chalcedonian Christians were trying to establish their alternative *loca sancta*, untainted by heterodox associations and free from the control of the ecumenical church. In this context, it has been suggested that Kosmas 'Indikopleustēs,' a Nestorian sympathiser, opted for Jabal Sirbāl as the 'Mount of the Law' (if indeed his was not an erroneous identification, see section 2.1).[885]

What had changed by the nineteenth century were the positivist methods used by the itinerant believers, purporting to validate the metaphysical revelation of *Exodus* through modern science. The first step in this direction had already been taken in the early eighteenth century, when the *Physica Sacra* by Johann Jakob Scheuchzer (Swiss, 1672-1733), a palaeontologist, palaeobotanist, explorer and follower of René Descartes (French, 1596-1650), was published (1728-1739).[886] In this groundbreaking yet pious work the supernatural incidents of the Bible were explained through physics, medicine and observed phenomena and were illustrated by 750 copper engravings combining religious art with natural

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[884] Olin 1843: 401.
[885] Maraval 1985: 75, 307; Hobbs 1995: 68.
[886] Scheuchzer 1732: 26-7, 84-7, 87-95, 100-08, 114-6, 119-20, plates CXVII, CXLIX-CLI, CLII-CLV, CLIX-CLX, CLXIV, CLXVII.

history subject matter.[887] On plate CLXVII, 'Mount Sinai' (but not a topographically accurate Hagia Koryphē) was depicted as a volcano (on similar theories, see sections 1.5.3, 2.2 and 2.4.3). More than a century later, Sir George Biddell Airy (British, 1801-1892), Astronomer Royal from 1835 to 1881, went to some pains to explain in a rigorous and scientific language the theory first illustrated by Scheuchzer.[888] The veracity of the Biblical description was beyond doubt but it had to fit within the confines of modern scientific knowledge.

Religious contentions were not the only incentive for arguments on Biblical topography. The fact that various secular funding bodies were willing to support the exploration of uncharted areas of the ailing Ottoman Empire, within which the Holy Land was situated, gave an additional motivation for explorers.[889] The years from the 1830s to the 1870s, which mark the highpoint of Sinaitic bibliographical production, also witnessed the rise of West and Central European countries into an unprecedented position of worldwide economic and political prominence. The Treaty of Paris of 1856 ensured better access for Europeans into the Ottoman territory.[890] Improved conditions of travel allowed a greater influx of visitors and several collected intelligence alongside archaeological testimonies.[891] The same means of transport which allowed hundreds of tourists to visit Sinai casually every year (section 5.6) were also responsible for a trade network which embraced the globe. The ultimate project of Sinaitic exploration, the *Ordnance Survey of the*

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[887] Kempe 2006: 114-9.
[888] Airy 1876: 55-6, 78-9.
[889] Vaczek & Buckland 1981: no pagination.
[890] Moscrop 2000: 45-8.
[891] For example, a 'traveller' who published a possible Exodus route from Sinai to Palestine was

Peninsula of Sinai, satisfied the most varied agenda of Biblical, scientific, political, economic and military objectives. Gunboats followed in the wake of entrepreneurial businessmen and devoted scholars and Egypt itself became a dependency of the British Empire in 1882.

In this context, it is not surprising that the earliest scholarly projects in Sinai combined cartographical, meteorological and mineralogical research with Biblical scholarship and daring adventure-seeking. Explorers gathered information of strategic and economical nature as well as specimens and testimonies of the Exodus. The three earliest ventures were U. J. Seetzen's ill-fated mission,[892] J. L. Burckhardt's British-financed tour[893] and Eduard Rüppell's scientific studies (figure 100).[894]

It was Burckhardt's discussion of the traditional identification of Mount Sinai that sparked the controversy examined in section 5.2, although his conclusion was partly in favour of Hagia Koryphē. The Scottish entrepreneur John Gardiner Kinnear (visited Sinai 18-22 February 1839) travelled with his compatriot David Roberts (1796-1864), the celebrated artist, but had his own business agenda, examining the 'prospects' of Muḥammad ᶜAlī Pasha's new government.[895] The economic prospects of Sinai were not only examined by Europeans. Muḥammad

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the diplomat Baron Koller, making the journey in March 1840; see Koller 1842.

[892] Seetzen 1855: 69-105, especially 81-6. On Seetzen's mission, see Stephens 1970: xxxi; *Seetzen* 1995: 17-21; Schienerl 2000: 64-7. Seetzen's note, written on a piece of paper stuck on the guest room of the Monastery, was transcribed nine years later by J. L. Burckhardt; see Burckhardt 1822: 553.

[893] Burckhardt 1822: 488-587.

[894] Rüppell 1829: 251-64; Rüppell 1838: 114-25; on Rüppell's mission, see section 1.5.1. E. Rüppell recorded his visit to Hagia Koryphē on the wall of the small chapel on the summit: 'E. Rüppell, 7th May 1831, 12 hours 15 min; barometer 21° 7′ 6′′; therm. 13 ¼ ° Réaum;' see Ritter 1866: 211.

[895] Kinnear 1841: 77-93. On D. Roberts' trip, see Roberts 1994: 44-61; Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 248. On J. G. Kinnear, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 244.

ᶜAlī himself had employed in 1830 and 1853 the Frenchman Louis Maurice Adolphe Linant de Bellefonds (1799-1883), chief engineer of the Suez Canal, to explore Sinai's mineral wealth and possible routes from Suez to Horeb.[896] Characteristically, Linant wore a different hat when he accompanied Léon Emmanuel Simon Joseph, marquis de Laborde (French, 1807-1869, figure 101) in 1828 for a scholarly and art-historical mission to the Monastery.[897]

However, most visitors and scholars going to Sinai from the second quarter of the nineteenth century made the journey hoping in earnest to find the Biblical Mount Sinai. The questioning of the identification of Hagia Koryphē went hand in hand with an unrelenting denial of all traditions and identifications,[898] an intensely anti-monastic feeling and a militant suspicion against the Orthodox clergy. Heterodoxy was not enough to justify such scorn. The growing gap between the 'civilised' nations of the West and the 'backward' nations of the East may sound commonplace after a century of scholarly criticism but it is clearly manifested in the derisory tone of the reports by many British, American or German travellers on the monks at the Monastery of Saint Catherine and their 'naive beliefs.' The Methodist Episcopal John Price Durbin (American, 1800-1876, visiting Horeb from 4 to 7 February 1843, ascended Hagia Koryphē on the 5th) was not alone in considering altogether misguided:[899]

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[896] Mazuel 1937: 17-22; Labib 1961: 114-6.
[897] Mazuel 1937: 99-103. On Laborde, see Vilnay 1963: XXI-XXII; Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 244.
[898] 'Before we leave Mount Sinai we will add a brief notice on the surroundings. They are replete with silly legends which disturb the gravity of a Protestant traveller, and yet show the deep local impression of the Mosaic events;' quote from Schaff 1878: 193. On Philip Schaff (Swiss-born American, 1819-1893), see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 248.
[899] Durbin 1845: 147.

> '...those men in whose eyes tradition of any kind is a sacred thing; who close their own senses and strangle their own reason in obedience to the voice of authority, be it only ancient.'

The Greek monks of the Monastery of Saint Catherine were submitted to a scrutiny which bordered on abuse from several of their guests and were often accused of being uneducated, idle, greedy and deceitful, '...a dull, stupid class of men.'[900] The Monastery altogether was characterized as '... a sort of caravansary [*sic*] for the entertainment of strangers and pilgrims.'[901] Horatius Bonar (British, 1808-1889, visited Horeb from 26 to 29 January 1856, ascended Hagia Koryphē on the 28th) was not alone in accusing them of cupidity:[902]

> 'He [the superior] came, not to give his blessing, as some tourists tell us, but to receive our gold with his own hands. We offered him three sovereigns, - but he held them up in his palm, and told us it was not enough! We told him that we meant to give no more, and bowing in eastern fashion to the group, we left our dragoman to settle with him, which he did by giving a dollar to each of the servants at his own cost. We had to pay dearly for the small amount of cleanliness and comfort which we had experienced. Of hospitality we found nothing.'

Two years earlier the British James Hamilton had described a similar incident:[903]

> 'We were, nevertheless, insensible to the magic of his [the prior's] gray hairs, and with the effrontery of ignorance, presented our single sovereign, which was received, not as we had supposed in silence or with thanks, but with expostulations, which, growing louder, quickened into such violent abuse, that my companion, who slowly relenting already held his purse in his hand, meaning to produce another of those images of our sovereign lady for which the monks showed so great a devotion, replaced it in his pocket.'

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[900] Randall 1867: 289. For his Horeb trip, see Randall 1867: 285-345; Randall 1886: 34-420.
[901] Olin 1843: 413. Amusingly, when G. H. Forsyth described in the mid-twentieth century the Justinianic fortress that would later become the Monastery, he noted that 'the monastery was in part a caravansary [*sic*]' – nevertheless in a less abusive tone; see Forsyth 1968: 8; Forsyth 1980: 56.
[902] Bonar 1857: 243. On H. Bonar, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 240-1. Similar accusations were phrased by Burckhardt 1822: 579-81; Henniker 1823: 226-7; Olin 1843: 408, 412; Dawson Borrer (British, visiting Horeb on 23-27 March 1843, ascending Hagia Koryphē on the 24th), see Borrer 1845: 346; Durbin 1845: 150; Hamilton 1993 (first published 1857): 21-2, 33-4; Bartlett 1862 (first published 1848): 92; Bartlett 1879: 265; Schaff 1878: 186-7; Brockbank 1914: 32-3; Beadnell 1927: 172-3. See Hobbs 1995: 136-8, 233, 256-7.
[903] Hamilton 1993 (first published 1857): 34. On J. Hamilton, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 243.

Another British traveller, Henry Crossley, writing in 1860, went further, attributing the identification of Hagia Koryphē with Mount Sinai to greed:[904]

> 'By a fraud of the Greek monks of St. Catherine, Mount Sinai has been identified with a locality in every respect unsuitable, and irreconcilable with the events which occurred there. [..] Their whole subsequent conduct has been one continued series of similar impositions, so palpable, so extravagant, and in some instances so unblushingly avowed by themselves, that in may be questioned whether, among the genus monk, any species like the monks of St. Catherine ever existed to degrade the Christian religion by their abominable fabrications. [...] It was not till the present century that the world began to awake to the palpable imposture of the monkish Sinai.'

The monks were seen not as Christian brethren but as slothful 'Orientals,' permeated by the 'immutability [which] is the most striking characteristic of the East.'[905] The ultimate condemnation probably came from the American Henry Bascom Ridgaway (1830-1895, visited Horeb on 16-21 March 1874, ascended Hagia Koryphē on the 17th), who identified the Monastery as 'a Botany Bay of the Greek Church, to which refractory monks are sent for punishment.'[906]

An additional accusation referred to the lack of proselytizing zeal on behalf of the handful of clerics within the Monastery.[907] The fate awaiting a preacher of any religion outside Islam within a Muslim country was obviously unknown to

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[904] Crossley 1860: 5, 16, 17.
[905] Warburton 1845: v.
[906] Ridgaway 1876: 66. Botany Bay in New South Wales, Australia, was the site of a British penal colony from 1788 and the subject of many a convict ballad.
[907] Robinson 1867: 143-4; Platt 1842: 154-8; Fisk 1843: 150-1 note 1; Olin 1843: 412; Gasparin 1848: 57-64, 82 – unusually a woman, but also a fervent Calvinist, see Labib 1961: 127-8; Ritter 1848; Ritter 1866: 242; Bonar 1857: 220; Beamont 1861: 72-5; Beamont 1871: 121; Schaff 1878: 192; Henry Martyn Field (American, 1822-1907, not to be confused with the anthropologist Henry Field also quoted in the thesis), who visited Horeb in spring 1882, see Field 1883: 104-187; Jullien 1893: 105; Sutton 1913: 94. E. Robinson mentioned two of the Monastery Bedouin serfs being baptised seven years before his 1838 visit, a piece of information unverified by other sources; see Robinson 1867: 137. Friedrich Adolph Strauss (German, 1817-1888, visiting Horeb between 28 February and 5 March 1845, ascended Hagia Koryphē on 1st March) mentioned a Bedouin convert attending the '*erhebende griechische Liturgie*,' but he could have been an Arab Christian pilgrim instead of a local; see Strauss 1848: 158-9; Strauss 1849: 125-6.

these opinionated critics,[908] who joined William Henry Davenport Adams (British, 1828-1891), writing in 1879, in his dismissive aphorism:[909]

> 'Nor have the monks of Sinai, from their first foundation to the present time, contributed in any way whatsoever to the sum of human knowledge.'

In the same vein, the American Samuel Colcord Bartlett (1817-1898, visited Horeb between 19 and 23 February 1874, ascended Hagia Koryphē on 20 February) wrote:[910]

> 'Everything in charge of these monks seems to relapse and go to ruin, and nothing to advance. ... We parted company with these cloistered worthies, carrying very little respect for them or their doings.'

Such attitudes seem to have been the privilege of mainly Anglo-Saxon writers without knowledge of Greek or any Oriental language. The churchman H. Bonar, despite coming from a centuries-old line of ministers, actually thought that the chanting in the Monastery *katholikon* was in modern Greek.[911] The topographical artist William Henry Bartlett (British, 1809-1854, visited Horeb between 12 and 20 October 1845) lightheartedly explained the visitors' unremitting condescension as a characteristic peculiar to his nation, part of 'that undaunted sense of privilege and rightness in being British:'[912]

> 'It struck me, indeed, during my stay, that they [the monks] treat travellers with less familiarity now that was their wont when their visits were more rare, and their habits less known; having, perhaps, been annoyed at that odd mixture of ill-timed joking and continual grumbling, which characterises so many of the wandering islanders, and of which they leave traces whenever the pages of an album offers an escape-vent for their eccentric humours.'

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[908] The monks had explained to the Jesuit missionary M. Jullien that such action would expose them to the wrath of fanatics; see Jullien 1893: 105.
[909] Adams 1879: 105.
[910] Bartlett 1879: 275, 284. On S. C. Bartlett, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 239.
[911] Bonar 1857: 219. The same mistake was made by Arthur Warwick Sutton (British, 1854-1925) visiting Horeb on 16-19 March 1912; see Sutton 1913: 101.
[912] Bartlett 1862 (first published 1848): 76; on W. H. Bartlett, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 239-40. Short quote in Hazleton 1980: 3.

The sceptics were not only '*milordi*'[913] but also German and their works were often translated from English to German and vice versa within months of original publication.[914] Father Marie-Joseph (French, 1772-1848, earlier Férdinand baron de Géramb, visiting Horeb between 25 February and 5 March 1833, on the summit the 1st March) studied the visitors' book and concluded that most entries belonged to either Englishmen or Germans.[915] Similarities between visitors from the two nations were remarkable. The Egyptologist Karl Richard Lepsius echoed his British colleagues:[916]

> 'The whole life of these four priests and twenty-one lay brothers is the reverse of edifying. They gave us the general impression of being, as it were, under a dark rain-cloud, weighed down by the continual pressure of ignorance and indolence, albeit the physical sky under which they vegetate is always cheerful, and the temperature moderate. They are the only inhabitants of the vast desert who can enjoy the refreshing shade of cypresses, palms, and olive trees. The small, but not uncomfortable cells they occupy are built round a neat and well-kept church, in the Basilica style, the inside of which is richly ornamented. They possess besides a library containing about 1500 volumes, an *ἰατρεῖον ψυχῆς* [soul hospice], in which, had they any taste for it, they might find a remedy for their ennui.' **(Text LXIX)**

This English translation was made within the same year of the book's original publication in Berlin. Such vibrant publishing activity made the repetition of standard 'experiences' and conclusions between writers separated by distance and language not only possible but also inevitable.

A typical visit, narrated in a typical way, can be found in a book by the printer, publisher and collector of antiquities John Gadsby (British, *circa* 1809-

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[913] Henniker 1823: 221-2.

[914] Including, among many others, Wellsted 1838 and Wellsted 1842; Lepsius 1846a, Lepsius 1846b and Lepsius 1852; Olin 1843 and Olin 1848; Ritter 1848 and Ritter 1866; Strauss 1848 and Strauss 1849; for translations from French into English, see Laborde 1830 and Laborde 1836; Géramb 1839 and Geramb 1840.

[915] Géramb 1839: 225-6; Geramb 1840: 331. On M.-J. Géramb, see Labib 1961: 119-22. A. Dauzats in 1830 counted in the Monastery's visitor album one American, twenty-two Frenchmen, three or four thousand Englishmen (a certain exaggeration; see Labib 1961: 118) and one English woman; see Dumas 1839a: 104; Dumas 1839b: 260.

1893) who travelled to the Holy Land with his wife and stayed at the Monastery from 6 to 8 March 1864.[917] Their group celebrated Sunday service in their rooms within the Monastery walls instead of the *katholikon* and ascended to the summit on 7 March. He used as his guides books by the Oxford professor Arthur Penrhyn Stanley (British, 1815-1881, Dean of Westminster from 1864, travelled 1852-3),[918] S. Olin,[919] William John Beamont (British, 1828-1868, visited Horeb in 1853 and in 5-7 December 1860, ascended Hagia Koryphē on the 6th),[920] and H. Bonar.[921] He discussed their suggestions as to the locality of the scriptural Mount Sinai and concluded (after much argumentation) that it was Hagia Koryphē after all. Before departing, he devoted three pages to the customary complaints over surcharging for the hospitality. Give or take a few details and the presence (or lack of) literary merit, this formula appears in most accounts of Sinai visits during the third quarter of the nineteenth century, the period during which the 'Mount of the Law controversy' raged most fiercely.

The common ground of the narratives examined so far was primarily the Protestant religious conviction of their Anglo-Saxon and German male writers. Few visitors from other national or religious groups and even fewer female ones ventured as far as accusing the monks of fraud or pecuniary greed, even though the Catholic abbot Antoine Raboisson (French, visiting Horeb in March 1882, up Hagia

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[916] Lepsius 1846b: 10. On R. Lepsius, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 245.
[917] Gadsby 1864: 27-40. On J. Gadsby, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 243.
[918] Stanley 1887: 3-62. On A. P. Stanley, see Moscrop 2000: 46; Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 248-9.
[919] Olin 1843: 375-422.
[920] Beamont 1861: 56-85. On W. J. Beamont, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 240.
[921] Bonar 1857: 217-43.

Koryphē on the 13th)[922] connected the Monastery to the murder of E. H. Palmer (figure 102) and two of his companions in August 1882 by some Bedouin:[923]

> 'Furthermore, it is not at all certain that the monks of Saint Catherine's would have reached the point of preventing or punishing this crime in a similar occasion. Apart from the fact that such an enterprise could have been very dangerous for them, they were certainly not ignorant of the fact that Palmer had accused them of a life of idleness, of shameful ignorance and of a little-edifying preference for his brandy and their raki. His person could not have been particularly close and precious to them.' **(Text LXX)**

Nonetheless, his comment was isolated and apart from him only the scholar Pierre Victor Lottin de Laval (French, 1810-1903, at the Monastery in March 1850, at Hagia Koryphē on the 8th) expressed mild disbelief in the monks' honesty.[924] Travellers from predominantly Roman Catholic countries were sympathetic or at least respectful, despite the millennial schism which separated their Church from Orthodox Christianity. These include J.-M. Coutelle,[925] the marquis de Laborde,[926] Frère Marie-Joseph,[927] *Monseigneur* Auvergne,[928] Charles, count de Pardieu,[929] Father Amedée of Damascus,[930] Alexandre Bida and Georges Hachette,[931] Dr H. T. J. Stacquez,[932] Paul

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[922] Raboisson 1886: 308-10, plates 62-75; Raboisson 1887: 5-67. On A. Raboisson, see Labib 1961: 137-8.
[923] Author's translation. On Palmer's murder, see Kitchener 1885: 199-200; Hazleton 1980: 4-8; Kamil 1991: 13-4 (Palmer's name incorrectly given as 'Parker'); Moscrop 2000: 138-42.
[924] Lottin de Laval 1855-9a: 163-74.
[925] French, 1748-1835, visiting Horeb on 24-28 October 1800, at the summit probably on the 26th; see Coutelle 1832: 201-5. A note he wrote on a piece of paper stuck in the guest room of the Monastery was transcribed sixteen years later by J. L. Burckhardt; see Burckhardt 1822: 552.
[926] Laborde 1830: 66-8, translated into English in Laborde 1836: 228-45.
[927] Géramb 1839: 211-53, translated into English in Geramb 1840: 321-49.
[928] French, 1793-1836, at Horeb 21-22 May 1835, ascending Hagia Koryphē on the 21st; see Auvergne 1854: 210-19. Auvergne was the first known Roman Catholic bishop to visit the Monastery after the 1054 schism; see Labib 1961: 122.
[929] French, on Horeb 8-11 October 1849; see Pardieu 1851: 184-98. On Pardieu, see Labib 1961: 129-30.
[930] French, visiting Horeb in 1859; see (Amedée) de Damas 1864: 207-22, 243-65. On Amedée, see Labib 1961: 131.
[931] Alexandre Bida (French, 1823-1895) and Georges Hachette (French, 1838-1892), visiting Horeb between 28 February and 4 March 1861, ascended Hagia Koryphē on 2 March; see Bida & Hachette 1864: 10-14.
[932] Probably Belgian, visiting Horeb on 7-9 February 1863, up to the summit on the 8th; see Stacquez 1865: 350-69. On H. T. J. Stacquez, see Labib 1961: 133-6.

Lenoir,[933] G. de Lombay,[934] M. Jullien,[935] the archduke Franz Joseph Otto (figure 103),[936] Adélaïde Sargenton-Galichon[937] and count Jean de Kergorlay.[938]

It is possible that the (predominantly French) Roman Catholic writers who supported the traditional identifications felt antagonistic towards the (predominantly British) Protestant writers who doubted them.[939] However, the reasons must have more to do with their devotion to the Church of Rome, which accepted pilgrimage sites, the patristic and ecclesiastical tradition behind their identifications and monasticism.[940] Writers from Roman Catholic countries were more familiar with the Sinaitic way of life and spirituality. The romantic rather than polemical tone of their accounts reveals their attitude, best summarised by Léon Cart (1869-1916):[941]

> 'The Sinai is a temple; one comes here to contemplate.' **(Text LXXI)**

Female travellers were not uncommon in South Sinai from the middle of the nineteenth century and they were often British, as the amused Father Amedée noted:[942]

> 'The lady had already been on the Sinai voyage; but she loved the desert; and returned there for her pleasure. [...] The Englishwoman travelled on a camel. She had adopted a special outfit for the desert.' **(Text LXXII)**

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[933] Lenoir 1872: 232-55. He travelled with fellow French painters Léon Joseph Florentin Bonnat (1833-1922) and Jean Léon Gérôme (1824-1904) invited by the khedive Isma'il Pasha (1830-1895, ruled 1863-1879). On P. Lenoir, see Labib 1961: 136-7; Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 244-5.
[934] Lombay 1892: 73-80.
[935] Jullien 1893: 102-54. Even a Jesuit like Jullien demonstrated his respect for the place despite his marked aversion towards 'schismatic' priests; see Labib 1961: 138-40.
[936] Austrian, 1865-1906, visiting Horeb on 6-7 March 1894; see Francis Joseph 1895: 48-56.
[937] French, visiting Horeb on 20-24 February 1902, on Hagia Koryphē on the 22nd; see Sargenton-Galichon 1904: 70-106.
[938] French, visiting Horeb in spring 1906; see Kergorlay 1911: 37-90.
[939] Moscrop 2000: 41-2.
[940] An early instance of the differentiation between Roman Catholic and Protestant writers as far as 'falsified' Sinaitic Biblical associations were concerned appears between the subtly doubting (or sometimes plainly descriptive) text of the Jesuit C. Sicard (section 4.3.2) and the scathing anti-monastic footnotes to his text by Robert Clayton, Lord Bishop of Glogher (section 5.1.1); see Prefetto 1810: 243 note *, 248 note *, 250 note *, 250-1 note *; Prefetto 1812: 284 note *, 289 note *, 291 note *, 291-3 note *.
[941] Author's translation. For an account of his visit, see Cart 1915: 114-72.
[942] Author's translation.

An early visit by the reformed Dutch courtesan Ida de Saint-Elme (her real name was E. Van Aylde Jongue) in 1828 came to an unfortunate end since she was not admitted to the Monastery (which at the time was still an *avaton* for females).[943] Other lady visitors were luckier. They included Miss Platt,[944] Valérie Boissier, countess de Gasparin,[945] Jane Loftus, marchioness of Ely ('lady of the bedchamber' to queen Adelaide between 1830 and 1834/7, figure 104),[946] Agnes Dorothee Bensly *née* von Blomberg,[947] Emily Hornby,[948] A. Sargenton-Galichon and Augusta Mary Rachel Dobson,[949] among others.[950] Their consideration, even sympathy, for the monks is remarkable when contrasted with the statements of their male equivalents – the Calvinist Gasparin being the sole exception.[951] Their attitude could be due to an actual preference of the monks, the 'hosts' for these frail and rarely seen creatures, who travelled for weeks on camelback to reach Horeb, just as

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[943] Labib 1961: 112-3.
[944] British, visiting Horeb between 28 March and 2 April 1839, spent most of her stay ill in bed and did not go up to Hagia Koryphē; see Platt 1842: 144-91.
[945] French, 1813-1894, visiting Horeb on 24-28 March 1848, on Hagia Koryphē on the 25th; see Gasparin 1848: 67-90.
[946] British, visiting Horeb on 6-10 March 1868, on Hagia Koryphē on the 7th; see Loftus 1870: 176-187.
[947] German writing in English, visiting Horeb between 5 February (or later) and 20 March 1893, ascended Hagia Koryphē in March; see Bensly 1896.
[948] British, 1834-1906, visiting Horeb on 2-6 March 1899, at the summit on the 3rd; see Hornby 1907: 39-58. On E. Hornby, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 243.
[949] Dobson 1925: 34-141. By the time A. M. R. Dobson (1872-1923) visited Horeb in 1922, the fifteen person mission she was a part of included eight women and the number of female visitors was enough to justify a different ladies' design for the traditional souvenir rings; see Dobson 1925: 1-4, 86.
[950] To this list should be added: Miss Bennet who visited Horeb before 1830 – a remarkably early date; see Dumas 1839a: 99; Dumas 1839b: 257. Charlotte Rowley (born in 1811), on honeymoon in Egypt, Sinai and the Sudan, at the Monastery during Christmas 1835; see Rowley-Conwy *et al.* 1998: 110. The marquise de Roche-Dragon in 1845; see Labib 1961: 126. Miss Brocklehurst and Miss Booth, met by P. Schaff in the late 1870s; see Schaff 1878: 187. And Mary Eliza Rogers, who did not specify whether and when she visited Horeb; see Rogers 1883: 230-8.
[951] Labib 1961: 127-8.

Egeria had done in 383.[952] Astonishingly, the 'superior' (the *dikaios*[953]) offered the ailing Miss Platt butter, eggs and cheese during the severe fasting period of Lent.[954]

The female travellers' positive stance could also be a result of their increased sensitivity, their excitement for a sort of adventure rarely before experienced by members of their sex within their cultural horizon, and their reluctance to put on paper their reservations in an aggressive manner deemed inappropriate for the delicate feminine character. As to their opinions on the Sinaitic inscriptions and Mount Sinai controversies, they took a variety of stances which never verged on extremes and usually preferred the traditional identification of the 'Mount of the Law.' Emily Hornby dutifully mentioned contradictory opinions on its location but avoided a conclusion.[955] In Miss Platt's words:[956]

> '...he, who for the mere sake of an hypothesis – which is the case with many opiniative but unscientific travellers – is determined to make some astonishing discovery, or to dispute and ridicule all that has been a subject of belief for centuries, for no other reason than the suspicion of its being of monkish origin, will derive but little pleasure, and less advantage, from the most interesting tour in the world.'

Harriet Martineau (British, 1802-1876, visited Horeb in March 1846) added:[957]

> 'I am thankful to have seen it; for, whether it be one of the historical holy places or not, its singular wildness renders it quite sacred enough.'

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[952] Charlotte Rowley noted (Rowley-Conwy *et al.* 1998: 110):

> 'I never was made so much of in my life as I was by the Greek Superior. I am the second Lady that ever has been there and in consequence he loaded me with all sorts of presents & though he was past 70, he always called me his *Mother*, the only term of endearment or distinction the poor man knew.'

Not all female visitors were fragile. A. Sargenton-Galichon climbed Hagia Koryphē and Hagia Zōnē (a notoriously difficult task), then rested in Hagioi Tessarakonta and climbed Hagia Aikaterinē on 22 and 23 February 1902; see Sargenton-Galichon 1904: 85-94.

[953] Second in the Sinaitic hierarchy after the archbishop. R. Pococke was the only western traveller that reported correctly the various Greek names of the Sinaitic clergy; see Pococke 1814: 291 note.

[954] Platt 1842: 150-1.

[955] Hornby 1907: 46.

[956] Platt 1842: 169.

[957] Martineau 1848: 315. On H. Martineau, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 246.

Typical of women frequenting Horeb in the nineteenth century but undeniably atypical of Victorian women are the Scottish twin sisters, Agnes Smith Lewis (1843-1926) and Margaret Dunlop Gibson (1843-1920). Both fluent in Greek, ancient and modern, and Lewis in Arabic, Hebrew and Syriac, too, the two indomitable scholars visited Sinai several times between 1892 and the outbreak of World War I in search of valuable manuscripts. In their narratives they demonstrate the delicate balance the monastic community struck with its female visitors.[958]

Able to communicate with the monks and appreciate both the uniqueness of their life and the importance of the collections they safeguarded, the two ladies nevertheless retained the feelings of superiority and infallibility which typified Victorian travellers. By the time A. Sargenton-Galichon met M. Dunlop Gibson in the Monastery library in 1902, both sisters enjoyed celebrity status among visitors.[959] The narratives of their three journeys to Sinai are accurate and reliable but already belong to the era of textual and art-historical scholarship that the twentieth century would prove to be.[960]

In conclusion, the circumstances within which the 'Mount of the Law controversy' was created can be linked to a phase of Western European and American ideology corresponding with the worldwide expansion of capitalist economy and the heyday of colonialism. They have at their root the principles of Biblical hermeneutics and empiricism, both spearheaded by Protestant

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[958] On M. Dunlop Gibson, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 243. On A. Smith Lewis, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 245.
[959] The two sisters were mentioned in narratives of the period; see Sargenton-Galichon 1904: 83; Cart 1915: 159-61.
[960] Lewis & Gibson 1999, a reprint of Gibson 1893 and Lewis 1898.

intellectuals, and relate to nineteenth-century narratives of cultural supremacy. The Mount Sinai question was one of the most fiercely debated of its time and brought the distant summit of Hagia Koryphē to the attention of the international scholarly community and a wide educated public. Despite the judicious voices of Catholic and female visitors, the majority of Sinai travellers would not surrender their aspirations to discover a Sinai of their own.

5.2. Alternative Sinais

Although the Sinai clergy had been viewed with a certain amount of suspicion from some earlier visitors, the identification of Hagia Koryphē with the Biblical Mount Sinai had not been questioned before the 1820s. Even the eccentric Joseph Wolff,[961] whose violent accusations against the monks of the Monastery of Saint Catherine shocked J. R. Wellsted[962] and S. Olin,[963] did not doubt the attribution. However, the picturesque missionary, described with penetrating irony by his travel companion John Carne (British, 1789-1844, visiting Horeb on 6-10 November 1821, up Hagia Koryphē on the 9th),[964] quoted a remarkable statement by a rabbi Soliman from Wilna, whom he met in Jerusalem:[965]

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[961] German Jew converted to Christianity and living in Britain, 1795-1862, visiting Horeb on 6-10 November 1821 and again fifteen years later, on Hagia Koryphē on 9 November; see Wolff 1824: 174-80; Wolff 1827a: 7-8; Wolff 1827b: 39-41. On J. Wolff, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 250. His scathing notes on a copy of the *Spectator* kept in the Monastery were noted by H. Martineau in 1846; see Martineau 1848: 312.

[962] For his Horeb stays, see Wellsted 1838: 53-5, 80-106 (83-4, 84 note * for Wolff); German translation in Wellsted 1842: 69-85.

[963] Olin 1843: 375-422 (410-11 for Wolff); German translation in Olin 1848.

[964] 'The rapture of Mr. W.'s feelings on the top of Sinai was indescribable; I expected to see him take flight for a better region;' quote from Carne 1830a: 223; see also Carne 1830b: 340-2. On J. Carne, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006:241.

[965] Wolff 1860: 198-9.

> 'Would He, therefore, admit or allow that a convent of monks should be built upon that mountain [Sinai]? No. It is, therefore, impossible that that mountain, upon which a convent stands, should be the Mount Sinai where the law was given, amidst thunders and lightnings. Mount Sinai is in England. Even Mount Tabor is in Europe.'

Even though the rabbi's odd words would find many British travellers in the second and third quarter of the nineteenth century agreeing in principle, the attack against Hagia Koryphē's claim in later times would be more rigorous, based on complex arguments laced with scientific authority.

The first sceptic was J. L. Burckhardt who visited Sinai in spring 1816 and whose account was posthumously published in 1822, edited by William Martin Leake (British, 1777-1860). Burckhardt was a knowledgeable traveller, fluent in Arabic and very well acquainted with the realities of desert and Bedouin life. The seventh chapter of his *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land*, describing his excursion to the Sinai in order to avoid the plague in Cairo, remains one of the shrewdest and most accurate accounts of the peninsula, its environment, its inhabitants and their economy, manners and traditions.

It was his inquisitiveness and rational spirit which prompted a discussion of the three summits of Hagia Koryphē, Hagia Aikaterinē and Jabal Sirbāl. He concluded, on the basis of material remains (section 5.2.1), that Sirbāl was originally thought to be Mount Sinai by worshippers, whereas, according to Scriptures, the two other mountains had a better claim to being the real holy places.[966] The Swiss traveller peppered his text with intelligent references to the Bible but

[966] Burckhardt 1822: 609.

presented none of the obsessive zeal of his followers and kept a respectful stance towards the monks of the Monastery of Saint Catherine and the Bedouin alike.

Even before the publication of Burckhardt's book, J. Carne was surprised 'at seeing beneath [the summit, where Moses received the Law] so few places where the hosts of Israel could have stood.'[967] Carne was one of the most interesting visitors to Sinai and his fluency in modern Greek allowed him to write an insightful account of everyday life in the Monastery. Nevertheless, his sharp wit and ironical nature could not avoid some incredulity based on personal experience.[968]

Most doubting writers visited Hagia Koryphē and its rivals and made up their mind based on their own observations and feelings. However, a certain degree of influence from previous visitors whose scholarly authority they held in high esteem is undoubted. It seems that once an alternative was proposed, several advocates would be found. However, few had the courage to admit they had not been to all the localities like W. H. Bartlett:[969]

> 'Altogether my pilgrimage to the monkish localities of Mount Sinai was shamefully incomplete and heterodox; but happily my deficiencies in this respect have been more than made up by former writers.'

Even fewer were prepared to abandon their rigour in favour of a gentler view of tradition, like Reverend Henry Paul Measor (British, died 1865, vicar of Kingston-on-Thames, visited Horeb on 26?-29 March 1842, ascended Hagia Koryphē on the 28th):[970]

> '... I am still inclined to believe it to be the true Mount Sinai on which the law was delivered; I am not willing to have the truth of these old traditions doubted, and their scenes transplanted. There is a poetry about old

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[967] Carne 1885: 106.
[968] For J. Carne's references to his Horeb stay, see Carne 1830a: 208-28; Carne 1885: 104-8.
[969] Bartlett 1862 (first published 1848): 91-2.
[970] Measor 1844: 142.

> associations which will not bear dislocation, and a prejudice in favour of occupation, which requires strong evidence to make me give a verdict in favour of the new claimant.'

In the following five sections (5.2.1-5.2.5) the main claimants to the title of 'Mount of the Law,' the 'alternative Sinais,' will be examined and their pros and cons briefly presented. The aim of this enumeration is not to discover the best candidate anew but to delve into their supporters' frame of mind. In this respect, the *Ordnance Survey* and Dr Beke (examined in sections 5.2.4 and 5.2.5 respectively) will provide two instructive examples.

5.2.1. Jabal Sirbāl

On 1 June 1816, J. L. Burckhardt ascended at great danger to himself the extremely steep summits of Jabal Sirbāl, an impressive mountain overlooking the Pharan oasis (figure 105). He witnessed on the first peak...:[971]

> '... steps regularly formed with large loose stones, which must have been brought from below, and so judiciously arranged along the declivity, that they have resisted the devastations of time, and may still serve for ascending.'

He then climbed on the eastern peak:[972]

> 'Here is a heap of small loose stones, about two feet high, forming a circle about twelve paces in diameter. Just below the top I found on every granite block that presented a smooth surface, inscriptions, the far greater part of which were illegible.'

On the basis of these finds and having noted the absence of similar inscriptions around Horeb and Hagia Aikaterinē, he concluded that Sirbāl 'was at one period the chief place of pilgrimage in the peninsula.' However, he added that:[973]

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[971] Burckhardt 1822: 607.
[972] Burckhardt 1822: 607.
[973] Burckhardt 1822: 609.

> '... I am equally convinced, from a perusal of the Scriptures, that the Israelites encamped in the Upper Sinai, and that either Djebel Mousa or Mount St. Catherine is the real Horeb.'

The Nabatean peak sanctuary he described on Jabal Sirbāl (and that already discussed on nearby Jabal Mu'tamr, see section 2.3) had nothing to do with the Biblical identification but his idea introduced the first contender for the title of the 'Mount of the Law.' Later advocates were more fervent in their support of Sirbāl's candidacy. K. R. Lepsius used as arguments the text of Kosmas (section 2.1), the presence of pre-Christian sites, the importance of Pharan as a religious centre in the Early Christian period and the occurrence of many Sinaitic inscriptions.[974] His views were supported by J. Kitto (British, 1804-1854), another Biblical scholar who never travelled to Sinai,[975] C. Forster (section 5.1.1),[976] E. Lecointre (French)[977] and Charles Trick Currelly (Canadian, 1876-1957).[978]

Additional advantages making Sirbāl an attractive candidate include the ease with which modern visitors could approach it by sea or land, the inaccessibility of its summit and the commanding aspect of its towering silhouette, a favourite of armchair Biblical 'explorers' like Kitto, Forster and Lecointre who never roamed the desert. The frequent encounter of Jabal Sirbāl in engravings and photographs testifies to its popularity as a 'Mount of the Law' contender (figures 105 and 138).

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[974] Lepsius 1846a: 13-52; Lepsius 1846b: 21-92; Lepsius 1852: 338-71. On Lepsius' theory, see Kutscheit 1846: 19-28; Poole 1854: 12.
[975] Kitto 1850: 137; Kitto 1860: 173-5.
[976] Forster 1862: 87-113; Forster 1865: 171-222.
[977] Lecointre 1882: 73-4, 77-9, 81-4. Lecointre, an engineer working on the Suez Canal, never visited either Horeb or Sirbāl; see Raboisson 1887: 9-36.
[978] Petrie 1906: 247-54.

5.2.2. Hagia Zōnē

The first author to propose Hagia Zōnē (section 1.5.3, figures 3, 4, 7, 106, 140, 147 and 148) as the 'Mount of the Law' was the American Edward Robinson (1794-1863, visited Horeb on 23-29 March 1838, ascended Hagia Koryphē and Hagia Zōnē on the 26th), Professor of Biblical Literature at the Presbyterian Union Theological Seminary. His rejection of Hagia Koryphē was based on his disappointment in the views afforded from it, calling his visit there '[t]he least satisfactory incident in our whole sojourn at Mount Sinai.'[979] After the necessary discussion of Biblical texts, he picked the arduously accessible summit at the opposite end of Horeb as his chosen location.

A point of attraction for Hagia Zōnē was its position, dominating the plain of al-Rāha, and its volume, which captured artists like the painter Edward Lear (British, 1812-1888, visited Horeb on 25-28 January 1849)[980] and the photographer Francis Frith (British, 1822-1898, visited Horeb between 1856 and 1857, figure 140).[981] Gathered in the plain, the flock of Moses could see him coming down from the God-trodden summit. Furthermore, Hagia Zōnē was the first part of Horeb visible as travellers approached, contrary to Hagia Koryphē which cannot be seen from the traditional route (from Pharan). Robinson was the most important Biblical scholar in nineteenth-century America and his theory remained popular,[982] especially among his compatriots.[983]

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[979] Robinson 1867: 106. On E. Robinson, see Davis 1996: 34-7, 113-5; Moscrop 2000: 19; Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 248.
[980] On E. Lear's Sinai experience, see Khatib 2001: 197-211.
[981] Frith *et al.* 1860b: plates *The Convent of Sinai, and Plain of er-Ráhà* and *Approach to the Convent of Sinai*; see also section 5.5.
[982] Russegger 1847: 44-9 [Joseph Ritter von Russegger (Austrian, 1802-1863), visited Horeb on 22 October-1 November 1838, ascended Hagia Koryphē on the 28th]; Martineau 1848: 317-8; Anderson

5.2.3. Hagioi Theodōroi, Hagia Aikaterinē and other peaks

Apart from the previously discussed alternative Sinais which gathered most supporters, other candidates were also suggested. The green-hued summit of Hagioi Theodōroi near the Monastery is lower than Hagia Koryphē but cuts a powerful figure against the warm-toned red granite, making an impression (figures 17 and 107). It was proposed as a possible 'Mount of the Law' by Alexander William Crawford Lindsay, 25th Earl of Crawford and 8th Earl of Balcarres (1812-1880), who visited Horeb between 16 March and 17 April 1837 and ascended Hagia Koryphē on the 21st.[984] His idea was reluctantly embraced by J. G. Kinnear.[985]

The highest summit in the Sinai Peninsula, Hagia Aikaterinē, was a good candidate owing to its impressive size (figures 6, 29 and 108). J. L. Burckhardt climbed it and thought it to be a good alternative to Hagia Koryphē (sections 5.2 and 5.2.1).[986] His suggestion was supported only by E. Rüppell.[987] The following summits were also identified with the 'Mount of the Law:' Mount Hor,[988] 'Jebel el-'Omjah,'[989] Serabit el-Khadim[990] and 'Jebel Hellal' (*sic*),[991] with one advocate each.

1852: 83-4; Frith *et al.* 1860a; Frith *et al.* 1860b; Beamont 1861: 55, 78-9, 81-3 (later to change his opinion; see Beamont 1871:121-6); Bartlett 1862 (first published 1848): 74; Loftus 1870: 186; Maughan 1873: 115-6; Manning 1875: 216-21; Adams 1879: 74-5, 108-9; Hall 1907: 246; Sutton 1913: 91.

[983] Olin 1843: 393-9; Durbin 1845: 142-8; Bausman 1861: 133; Randall 1867: 319; Ridgaway 1876: 75-7; Schaff 1878: 174, 178-9; Field 1883: 113-7.

[984] Lindsay 1858 (first published in 1838): 194-7. On A. W. C. Lindsay, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 245.

[985] Kinnear 1841: 90-1.

[986] Burckhardt 1822: 609.

[987] Lepsius 1846a: 6; Lepsius 1846b: 12; Beke 1878: 15-6.

[988] Greene 1883: 156-7; Greene 1884: 230-7. John Baker Greene himself never visited Sinai.

[989] Crossley 1860: 20-36.

[990] Eckenstein 1921: 74-82.

[991] Jarvis 1931: 171-2.

5.2.4. Hagia Koryphē and the Ordnance Survey of the Peninsula of Sinai

The first to insist on the necessity of a trigonometrical survey of the peninsula of Sinai in order to solve the problems surrounding the location of Mount Sinai was the Egyptologist Sir John Gardner Wilkinson (British, 1797-1875), who in 1843 published the first guidebook of Egypt, including Sinai.[992] His wish was fulfilled almost twenty-five years later, when the London-based Palestine Exploration Fund organised the mapping of South Sinai, alongside a systematic gathering of scientific facts (geological, meteorological, hydrographical), place names, inscriptions, building ground-plans and photographic views (figure 109, 110).[993] The results of this project would reinforce the identification of Hagia Koryphē with the 'Mount of the Law' and would conclude half a century of passionate arguments.

The *Ordnance Survey* project had military and political agenda to fulfil beyond its Biblical inspiration (section 5.1.2). The Sinai Peninsula was strategically situated on the sea route from the Mediterranean to India through the Suez Canal which opened to traffic on November 17, 1869,[994] a few months after the conclusion of the Sinai *Survey*.[995] British interests had strongly opposed the construction and control of the Canal by the French and although no direct link appears to survive between the two events, the timing of the scholarly mission to

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[992] Wilkinson 1843: 412-3; Wilkinson 1847: 220. The venerable Egyptologist had not visited Sinai himself and borrowed most of his information from E. Robinson, see Wilkinson 1843: 402; Wilkinson 1847: 215. From the early nineteenth century to the *Ordnance Survey* there were a few maps of Sinai published; see Fontaine 1955: 175.

[993] For a brief mention of the work of the *Ordnance Survey* within the context of scientific scholarship on the area, see section 1.5.1.

[994] Moscrop 2000: 58-60. See also Hobbs 1995: 244.

[995] A first survey of the Red Sea area on behalf of the Bombay government 'relative to the establishment of a steam communication between India and Europe' had been organised by Lieutenant J. R. Wellsted in 1833 and again in 1836; see Wellsted 1838: 1 and German translation

map the Sinai makes it highly probable that it was part of a project to gather information and control this waterway.[996] Later mapping projects, before and during the British annexation of Egypt (1882), had an explicitly imperialist scope.[997]

The mission sailed from Southampton on 21 October 1868 and the survey had been concluded with extreme rapidity by May 1869.[998] The results were published in five volumes by 1871.[999] The party, pictured in figure 110, included Captain (later Sir) C. W. Wilson (the mission leader, third from the right smoking a pipe in the photograph), the Reverend Frederick Whitmore Holland (second from the right), Captain H. S. Palmer (seated in the middle), E. H. Palmer (at the time Fellow of Saint John's College Cambridge, third from the left), C. W. Wyatt (seated in the far right), Sergeant-Major James MacDonald (1822-1885, the photographer), three non-commissioned officers of the Royal Engineers and three local guides (Hassan and Salem first and second from left).[1000]

The composition of the group testifies to a typical High Victorian mixture of religion, scholarship and imperialism.[1001] The survey, like most early work by the Palestine Exploration Fund, was seen as a British crusade serving God, country

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in Wellsted 1842.

[996] Wilson & Palmer 1869: part I, 5-15, 139-49; Moscrop 2000: 81.

[997] For a list of various expeditions in the Sinai, see Murray 1953: 151-3. It is typical of the British sense of desert landscape that the whole triangulation of the peninsula used by subsequent missions was based on the garden of the 'Suez Hotel,' which had moved to another building, a quarter of a mile away, since the time of the *Ordnance Survey*. This resulted in interesting distortions on paper; see Murray 1953: 152.

[998] Howe 1997: 40-1; Moscrop 2000: 81.

[999] Wilson & Palmer 1869, in five volumes. On the date of publication, see Eckenstein 1921: 186.

[1000] Holland 1871: 514-5.

[1001] Vaczek & Buckland 1981: no pagination.

and scientific progress.[1002] In the words of William Thomson (1819-1890), archbishop of York and the Fund's president:[1003]

> This country of Palestine belongs to you and to me. It is essentially ours. [...] We mean to walk through Palestine in the length and in the breadth of it because that land has been given unto us. [...] It is the land to which we may look with as true a patriotism as we do to this dear old England, which we love so much.'

The discreet but ardent supporter who underwrote the hazardous and financially risky expedition was Angela Georgina Burdett-Coutts, first Baroness Burdett-Coutts (1814-1906), the richest woman in Britain, a notable philanthropist, patriot and Church of England supporter.[1004]

To this day, the volumes of the *Ordnance Survey* remain the most impressive monument to the period's obsession with Biblical topography. The answer proposed by C. W. Wilson, H. S. Palmer and their fellow group members was in favour of Hagia Koryphē's candidacy for 'Mount of the Law.' The area had the best natural resources, its topography was closer to the Bible and routes leading to it conformed best to the book of *Exodus*. The results appeared in abridged form in a book by H. S. Palmer, which made available to a wide public the mission's results in the fields of natural sciences, history, archaeology and Biblical studies.[1005]

The outcome of the *Survey* seemed to satisfy most scholars with its stringent method and the scholarly credentials of its members.[1006] However, several

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[1002] Moscrop 2000: 2-3, 102-4.
[1003] Address to the first meeting to the Fund at Willis's Rooms, London, 22 June 1865; see Moscrop 2000: 70-1.
[1004] Howe 1997: 40. A. G. Burdett-Coutts had also supported the Ordnance Survey of Jerusalem a few years earlier; see Vaczek & Buckland 1981: no pagination.
[1005] For theories on the location of the 'Mount of the Law,' see Palmer 1878: 164-82; Palmer 1892: 173-91.
[1006] Scholars that supported Hagia Koryphē before the *Ordnance Survey* publication include: Burckhardt 1822: 609 (alongside Hagia Aikaterinē); Wellsted 1838: 54-5, 100-3; Wellsted 1842:

Protestant scholars remained suspicious of any opinion which agreed with that of the 'corrupted' monks and at best adopted the relaxed attitude of the American Benjamin Bausman (1824-1909, visited Sinai between 16 and 20 March 1861, ascended Hagia Koryphē on 17 March):[1007]

> 'Whether this be the identical spot or not, the pure air and toil of climbing mountains, however sacred, creates a desire for food; and here, at a place toward which I had been accustomed to look from my distant home with almost adoring reverence, we soon were seated on the bare rock, each with fowl in hand, stripping off substantial food as best he could, *à la* Bedouin.'

5.2.5. The formidable Dr Charles Tilstone Beke

Dr Charles Tilstone Beke (British, 1800-1874) provides an interesting comparison with Reverend Charles Forster (section 5.1.1), in that the eccentricity of his views was counterbalanced by the earnestness with which his contemporaries either accepted or rejected them. His theories proposed an alternative Mount Sinai locality and applied do-it-yourself Biblical archaeology and hermeneutics to an unprecedented degree. For these reasons, they deserve an extended mention as representative products of the psychopathology of their era.

Born in Stepney, Middlesex, Beke practiced trade and law before devoting himself to historical, geographical and ethnographical studies. He gained his

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86-92; Fisk 1843: 155; Borrer 1845: 330; Gasparin 1848: 76; Kellogg 1848: 44; Ritter 1848 and Ritter 1866: 216-25; Pardieu 1851: 194; Graul 1854: 213-5 (Carl Graul, German, 1814-1864, visited Horeb in March 1853, up Hagia Koryphē on 5 March); Lottin de Laval 1855-9a: 208-10, 225-8; Stanley 1887 (first published 1856); Bonar 1857: 234, 237-8; Hamilton 1993 (first published in 1857): 30; Bräm 1859: 238-99; Tyrwhitt 1864: 346 (Richard St John Tyrwhitt, British, 1827-1895, visited Horeb in February 1862); Gadsby 1864: 33-7; (Amedée) de Damas 1864: 221; Brocklebank 1865: 177-8; Kræmer 1866: 356-8 (Robert Fredrik von Kræmer, Swedish, 1791-1880, visited Horeb on 17-20 April 1862); Beamont 1871: 121-6. After the 1871 publication of the *Ordnance Survey* many more followed: Holland 1870: 21-6; Holland 1871: 519-25 (Holland was a member of the *Ordnance Survey* team); Clarke 1884: 101; Dawson 1885: 43-4; Hull 1885: 186-7; Lombay 1892: 75; Jullien 1893: 121, 132-7; Bensly 1896: 145-6; Sargenton-Galichon

doctorate from the University of Tübingen, Germany.[1008] His travels to Africa and the Holy Land combined geographical curiosity with business acumen and by the end of his life he could afford to indulge in privately-funded explorations which produced lavish yet conjectural volumes of literature.

It was only a matter of time before he devoted himself to the most debated issue of Biblical geography, the location of the 'Mount of the Law.' His original contribution, first suggested in 1834, was that Biblical Egypt was not in the Nile Delta but in an area to the east, therefore Mount Sinai should be looked for to the east of the Gulf of Aqaba.[1009] To prove this, he travelled to Arabia between 8 December 1873 and 19 March 1874, a few months before his death. He refused to be a part of the 'general system of fraud and imposture in which the whole history of the convent [of Saint Catherine] is involved' and agreed with others that '[t]he deliberate fraud and falsehood of the Greek clergy, from the earliest ages of Christianity, are matters of history.' Therefore, he rejected Hagia Koryphē as 'absolutely destitute of verdure, cultivation, running streams, and even of abundant springs, and with no resources whatsoever' and did not visit the Sinai Peninsula altogether.[1010]

Relying on the word of an unnamed person he met in Egypt (on 6 January 1874) about a mountain where God spoke to Moses near Aqaba, he circumnavigated the peninsula and landed in the Red Sea port.[1011] After a day's ride, he

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1904: 68-9; Rendall 1911: 167; Closen 1935: 23-4.
[1007] Bausman 1861: 128-50, quote on page 132.
[1008] For his work *Origines Biblicæ*; see Beke 1834. On the title page of the British Library copy of this book, the suffix 'Ph.D.' was added by hand after the author's name.
[1009] Beke 1834: 154-96; Beke 1835; Beke 1862: 9-12; Beke 1871; Beke 1873.
[1010] Quotes from Beke 1878: 31, 32 and 34 respectively.
[1011] Beke 1878: 226-7.

approached 'Jebel-e'-Nūr' (*sic*) and sent his companion John Milne (British, 1850-1913) up the mountain to check for signs of God's presence.[1012] Satisfied with Milne's report, he declared this to be the true 'Mount of the Law' and hastened to publish his discovery in *The Times*,[1013] to the dismay of the authorities of the *Ordnance Survey*, who had concluded in favour of Hagia Koryphē.[1014] His widow, editor of the posthumous narrative of his journey, chose the line '*che sara, sara*' (Italian for 'what will be, will be') to precede her husband's tirades.

Dr Beke was an opinionated and passionate Victorian amateur. Despite the ironical stance of the scholarly community towards his methods, he steadfastly searched for Biblical localities 'on the testimony of the Hebrew Scriptures alone, regardless of all traditional interpretations and identifications.'[1015] Therefore, his work exemplifies the plight of nineteenth-century Protestant believers on a mission of Biblical discovery without the political, economic and military agenda of the *Ordnance Survey* party. On his results, one could quote Professor Ernst Friedrich Karl Rosenmüller's (German, 1768-1835) reaction to his earliest work:[1016]

> '[...] so many new and hitherto unheard of [views], such as I do not recall having found in any other book of our times.' **(Text LXXIII)**

[1012] Beke 1878: 406-12.
[1013] On 27 February 1874, reprinted in Beke 1878: 560.
[1014] Beke 1878: 560-3, 567-9, 575-80. Captain Jerzy Rękczyński enthusiastically discussed Beke's results in diatribes of his own focusing on the Moabite Stone (or Mesha Stele, now in the Louvre, Paris), discovered in 1868; see Renczynski 1875; Renczynski 1880. An unlikely sympathiser for Beke's views was H. J. L. Beadnell, writing in the mid-1920s; see Beadnell 1927: 172.
[1015] Beke 1862: 9.
[1016] Author's translation.

5.3. A centre of Orthodox life

In the 1865 account of his 1863 visit, H. T. J. Stacquez acknowledged that most visitors to the Monastery were Russian in origin. Greeks followed, while other nations were rarer.[1017] The fact that many more published narratives of visits survive from Western European countries and the United States simply testifies to the greater publishing activity and demand for original travel accounts in that part of the world.[1018] The Orthodox pilgrim traffic simply followed the medieval pattern uninterrupted,[1019] as it continues to do to this day, with large groups of believers flocking to the Monastery and up Hagia Koryphē anonymously. The experience alone was edifying and exciting and did not necessarily qualify for a written report. Private prayer was deemed more appropriate (section 4.2).

Prints destined for an Orthodox audience were published throughout the eighteenth and the early nineteenth century (figures 111 and 112). They popularised unique works of named icon painters, like the one by Iakōvos Moschos from the first quarter of the eighteenth century preserved at the Monastery (figure 113).[1020] In it, Old Testament incidents, patristic traditions and modern reality blended into an atemporal view of the place.

However, Russian scholars coming from the only Christian Orthodox state with a scholarly output and a university structure of note before the twentieth

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[1017] Stacquez 1865: 356. See also Burckhardt 1822: 485, 552; Gadsby 1864: 29; Randall 1867: 290; Robinson 1867: 131; Buxton *et al.* 1895: 131-2; Bensly 1896: 124; Hobbs 1995: 221-2. Orthodox pilgrims would not sign a visitor album unless they were members of the higher clergy.
[1018] The same is true for medieval pilgrimage accounts; see section 4.2.
[1019] On eighteenth-century pilgrims, see Volney 1787: 324.
[1020] *Egeria* 2008: 273-4.

century visited Sinai and took an interest in what the Monastery had preserved.[1021] Despite being aware of the 'Mount of the Law controversy' raging in Western Europe, their agenda remained different. The Ukrainian monk, later archbishop, Porfiriĭ Uspenskiĭ (1804-1885, visited Sinai in 1845)[1022] and even the German Lobegott Friedrich Constantin (von) Tischendorf (1815-1874, visited Sinai in 1844, 1853 and 1859) built their illustrious careers on the desire of the Russian imperial family and academic establishment for testimonies of Orthodoxy's ancient roots. They both removed manuscripts from the Monastery (Uspenskiĭ even took four icons) and presented them to imperial authorities or educational institutions, strengthening Russia's collections of Christian 'relics' and its claims to predominance among Christian nations (section 5.4).

Other Russian scholars were less predatory, like Nikodim Kondakov (1844-1925), one of the pioneer historians of Byzantine art, who in 1881 organised the first archaeological expedition to Sinai which examined art rather than topography and used a camera to record artefacts.[1023] Antonin Kapustin (1817-1894, visited Horeb in 1870) studied the Glagolitic and Cyrillic manuscripts.[1024] Decades later, it would be the work of Vladimir Nikolaevich Beneshevich (1884-1938), who visited Sinai in 1907, 1908 and 1911,[1025] which placed the artworks and manuscripts of the Monastery in their central position for the study of Byzantine

[1021] Greece had a university in Athens since 1837 but its scholarly output and the publishing activity of this small state was universally ignored until the 1930s.
[1022] He should not be confused with the Byzantine historian Fëdor Uspenskiĭ (1845-1928).
[1023] On Kondakov's mission and its results, see Weitzmann 1982b: 8-9.
[1024] Tarnanidēs 1988: 32-3.
[1025] On Beneshevich's visits and manuscript studies, see Tarnanidēs 1988: 32-3.

art.[1026] His valuable archive of transcripts and photographs was destroyed between 1928 and 1931 during searches by the Soviet police seeking proof of his alleged spying for the Vatican, Germany and Poland. Beneshevich himself was imprisoned (1931-1933) and after a second arrest in 1937 on suspicion of Nazi sympathies executed by the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs in January 1938. His fate is representative of the suspicion faced by Byzantinists under Joseph Stalin's (Georgian, 1878-1953) regime. Their persecution is one of the main reasons why the important contributions of Russian scholars to Sinaitic studies have remained unknown – the language barrier being the other.

Despite the different focus in relation to Western Europe, Russian academia did not operate in a vacuum and the 'Mount of the Law controversy' was discussed in detail by the scholar and statesman Avraam Sergeevich Norov (1795-1869). In his study he covered not only the Sinaitic inscriptions and the scholarly theories on them and the 'Mount of the Law,' but also the history of the Monastery with an emphasis on its ecclesiastical authorities and their long tradition.[1027]

During the eighteenth and the nineteenth century, the Sinaitic clergy was a breeding ground of and an action field for a series of important archbishops who distinguished themselves and their Monastery within the predominantly Greek-speaking hierarchy of the Orthodox Church.[1028] In 1804 Constantios Vyzantios (1770-1859), an archimandrite of Cretan origin who was born in Constantinople, was

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[1026] Beneshevich 1925. On his work, see Weitzmann 1982b: 5 note 1, 9.
[1027] Norov 1878: 61-135.
[1028] The extensive record of nineteenth-century publications in Greek connected with the Monastery serves as indisputable proof of the intellectual standing of Sinai; see the bibliography in Konidares 1971: 537-50.

elected archbishop.[1029] He had been educated in Constantinople, Italy and Kiev and was exarch of the Sinaitic priories in the Danubian principalities and Cairo, where he negotiated in 1798 the famous Napoleonic decree protecting the Monastery. It is possible that his personality inspired the French general's words:[1030]

> '... the Convent of Mount Sinai is occupied by educated and civilised men, in the middle of barbarians that inhabit the desert they live in.' **(Text LXXIV)**

Typically for an archbishop of Sinai, Constantios lived far from his desert seat, in Cairo (at the Tzouvania priory, see section 4.3.3) and mostly in Constantinople where he rose to briefly become patriarch while keeping the Sinaitic title (1830-4). His successor, Kyrillos Vyzantios, held the throne of archbishop from 1859 to 1867, when he was unseated by the *synaxis* (council) of the monks for autocratic behaviour. He also spent most of his time in Constantinople.[1031] The next archbishop, Kallistratos, was a monk in the Monastery rather than a career cleric, less educated but much devoted to his vocation. He made the fortress on Horeb once more the centre of Sinaitic ecclesiastical life,[1032] secured a

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[1029] On Constantios, see Amantos 1953: 68-9; Labib 1961: 149; Isaias 2000: 26-7.

[1030] Author's translation. The letter, dated 19 December 1799, is quoted in Grēgoriadēs 1875: 130-1 note 1; Renaudin 1900: 319-21; Amantos 1953: 70-2 (Greek translation); Skrobucha 1966: 99-100; it is illustrated in *Egeria* 2008: 218-9. Napoleon Bonaparte had been (incorrectly) reported as having spent a few days at the Monastery between 28 and 30 December 1798; see Meistermann 1909: 141; Labib 1961: 105. On his intercession, see Eckenstein 1921: 183-4; Kamil 1991: 32-3. The French army restored in 1801 the northern wall of the Monastery that had been damaged during a storm in December 1798; see Turner 1820: 443-4; Coutelle 1832: 205 note 1; Grēgoriadēs 1875: 126-35; Meistermann 1909: 124; Amantos 1953: 68; Labib 1961: 105-6. One of the towers of this wall is still known as 'the Kléber tower,' after the French general Jean Baptiste Kléber (1753-1800); see Skrobucha 1966: 82. The Monastery appears in plate 103, number 3, on the second volume of the monumental 1809 *Description de l'Égypte*: *Vue de couvent de Ste. Catherine, peinte dans l'église du Mont-Sinaï*, signed by J.-M. Coutelle after a 1778 painting by Iōannēs Kornaros at the back of the archbishop's throne at the *katholikon*; see Rabino 1935: 70, 85 inscription 39; *Description* 1994: 682.

[1031] Amantos 1953: 73-5.

[1032] Meistermann 1909: 124 note 1; Amantos 1953: 75-6; Labib 1961: 149; Skrobucha 1966: 86. It was during Kallistratos' time that the present belfry next to the *katholikon* (figure 80) was erected by a mason from Tenos in the Aegean named Iakōvos Varoutēs; see Rabino 1935: 34, 86, inscriptions 42-44; Skrobucha 1966: 90.

decree of protection by the Ottoman sultan Abdülaziz (1830-1876, ruled 1861-1876),[1033] but his tenure was plagued by financial difficulties.

Much of the Monastery's wealth originated far from Sinai. The network of priories, *metochia*, extended from France and Italy to the Ottoman Empire,[1034] Corfu and even India.[1035] They ensured a steady flow of income, with the years between 1845 and 1863 being particularly good, reaching 25,000-30,000 Ottoman pounds a year.[1036] Therefore, revenue hardly depended on the (generally parsimonious) travellers. Things worsened after 1863, when priories in the rich Danubian territories were confiscated, and again in the 1870s, when the Russian priories were dissolved by the government.[1037] Kallistratos' successor, Porphyrios I (on the throne from 1885 to 1904) managed to counter the crisis and fill the coffers. He was educated, fluent in several languages and an able diplomat. His successor, Porphyrios II, had studied in Constantinople and Germany and lived in Paris before ascending the Sinai throne in 1904. He remained archbishop until 1926.[1038]

[1033] Grēgoriadēs 1875: 133-5.
[1034] Pharan, Raithō and other sites in the Sinai; Alexandria; Palestine (in Jerusalem and Jaffa); Syria (in Damascus, Laodicea and Antioch); Lebanon (see *Egeria* 2008: 91-2); Cyprus; Crete; Constantinople (see *Egeria* 2008: 91-2); Danubian Principalities; Bulgaria; and several other places.
[1035] The Bombay and Calcutta priories were created in 1772 and 1777; see Amantos 1953: 67. For lists of priories, see Pitra 1885: 562-3, 589-90; Jullien 1893: 106 (both mention several priories and two early thirteenth-century papal *bullae* protecting them); Amantos 1953: 99-100; Skrobucha 1966: 91; Hobbs 1995: 83. See also Grēgoriadēs 1875: 88-97; Meistermann 1909: 121; Eckenstein 1921: 188; Amantos 1953: 35-8; Labib 1961: 56; Kamil 1991: 29; Manaphēs 1990: 380; Dansette 2001: 79-80; Mouton & Popescu-Belis 2006: 26-7. On some Cypriot priories, see Giovanni 1919: 342. It took sensitive visitors with language skills like W. Turner and J. L. Burckhardt for the network of priories to get a mention in western bibliography; see Turner 1820: 443-4; Buckhardt 1822: 549, 556-7. Their references were ignored for a century in the West.
[1036] Grēgoriadēs 1875: 147-8.
[1037] Grēgoriadēs 1875: 123-4, 147-8; Kamil 1991: 35. In the twentieth century new confiscations of Sinaitic property in Roumania, the Soviet Union and Turkey further reduced Sinaitic income; see Rabino 1938: 4.
[1038] On Porphyrios I and Porphyrios II, see Amantos 1953: 76-7.

The profiles of the archbishops examined above hardly conform to the humble portraits given by western travellers. Although these higher clerics often spent long periods of time outside their desert seat, they left behind them capable representatives. The common accusation of ignorance pressed against the monks seems not to have taken into account that at least one of them in 1887 had formally studied theology in Germany and he probably was not alone.[1039] Even earlier, probably in 1850, the monk Parthenios, who resigned from public life after being rejected by a female member of the French royal family, is reported as being a nephew of the Greek count Étienne (Stéphane, Stephanos) Zizinia, the consul of Belgium (born in 1823) – clearly not an uneducated person.[1040] When count Zizinia himself visited the Monastery with H. T. J. Stacquez and the duke of Brabant, later king Leopold II of the Belgians (1835-1909), in 7-9 February 1863, the party was welcomed by the superior (*dikaios*?) with a speech in French. Stacquez noted:[1041]

> 'Far from considering them as ignorant and devoid of all merit, I have to declare that I found among them educated people, pious and extremely praiseworthy.' **(Text LXXV)**

Finally, the nature of monastic life at Horeb hardly called for many educated clerics. J. L. Burckhardt in 1816 found among the twenty-three monks:[1042]

> '... a cook, a distiller, a baker, a shoemaker, a tailor, a carpenter, a smith, a mason, a gardener, a maker of candles, &c. &c.'

[1039] Raboisson 1886: 309; Lombay 1892: 77.
[1040] Lottin de Laval 1855-9a: 173-4.
[1041] Author's translation. Stacquez 1865: 350-69. Many works of art commissioned for and made within the walls of the remote Monastery testify to a lively artistic and spiritual life radiating all over the Orthodox Christian world. Costly decorative items (like the enormous decorated candles) can be dated by inscriptions to the eighteenth and the nineteenth century; see Koufopoulos *et al.* 2000: 267-75.
[1042] Burckhardt 1822: 550.

The harsh realities of desert life and the onerous duties of ecclesiastic routine were better served by simple, robust and industrious men. The notion entertained by certain western visitors that Monasteries ought to be great centres of learning, the equivalent of European seminaries, certainly did not correspond to the ancient tradition of mystical and private spirituality prevalent in Orthodox asceticism. The Monastery was organised along the lines of a medieval coenobium, faithful to the principles of Early Christian asceticism. Even in the twenty-first century, the small community resembles more a government with cabinets assigned to each monk than a commune of inspired theologians discussing Biblical passages.

5.4. Treasure hunters and scholars

It was the combined effort of Biblical scholars and Byzantine art historians that eventually changed the image and fate of Horeb towards the end of the nineteenth century. The first to realise the importance of the Monastery's art treasures was P. Uspenskiĭ, the Ukrainian scholar monk mentioned in section 5.3. He trained in the Theological Academy of Saint Petersburg and cultivated an interest in the Early Christian period. Therefore, he was well equipped to recognise the early date of several icons kept in the Monastery. He managed to remove, under questionable circumstances, four of them to Russia *circa* 1845. He eventually donated them to the Ecclesiastical Academy of Kiev and they are now in the Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko Museum of Art in the same city.[1043] He also removed several

[1043] Galavares 1990a: 92; Dahari 2000: 62; Cormack & Vassilaki 2008: 360, 460.

manuscripts from the library.[1044] His clergyman's status and association with Russia, the largest Orthodox state, must have made it easier for the monks to trust him. His background, training and acquisitiveness allowed him to remove some of the earliest and most valuable relics preserved within the Justinianic walls, setting an (unfortunate) example for later scholars.

However, not all contemporary visitors shared Uspenskiĭ's taste. Despite A. W. C. Lindsay's 1838 assessment that '...most of them [icons] are modern, but some are very ancient and very interesting for the history of the art; they are almost all in good preservation,'[1045] the opinion of European visitors and scholars on the works of art in the Monastery was usually negative. The icons were thought to be 'bad pictures; grim-looking saints, and tawdry simpering madonnas, in the flat hard style common in the Greek churches' in J. G. Kinnear's words or 'mere daubs' as Thomas Cook's handbook for tourists would put it.[1046] The Justinianic doors of the *katholikon* (section 3.2, figure 39) were, according to S. Olin, 'of the rudest workmanship, not at all superior to the cabin which a new settler in the wilds of America hastily constructs with no tools but his axe and auger.'[1047] When H.

[1044] Aleksidze *et al.* 2005: 357-8.

[1045] Account first published in 1838; see Lindsay 1858: 159-204, quote from page 187. W. Turner in 1815 had noticed (and described) a twelfth-century icon of the *Klimax* (figure 114); see Turner 1820: 431. Similar admiration for the icons was expressed a few years later by A. Dauzats (Dumas 1839a: 89; Dumas 1839b: 245) and by Charles, count de Pardieu (author's translation):

> 'They are mostly Byzantine paintings, Russian or Greek, on a gold ground and exceptionally fine. One admires the patience of the painter who, in such a small space, has managed to depict myriads of small figures.' **(Text LXXVI)**

[1046] Kinnear 1841: 80; Cook 1897: 312. See also Coutelle 1832: 202; Géramb 1839: 215, 221-5; Geramb 1840: 324, 328-31; Fisk 1843: 150; Wilkinson 1843: 410; Wilkinson 1847: 219; Anderson 1852: 82; Hamilton 1993 (first published in 1857): 24; Maughan 1873: 105; Ridgaway 1876: 67, 88; Adams 1879: 98; Jullien 1893: 112-5; Bensly 1896: 111; Sargenton-Galichon 1904: 76; Kergorlay 1911: 73.

[1047] Olin 1843: 407.

Martineau visited the library, the only thing she managed to examine was a copy of the *Spectator*.[1048] S. C. Bartlett noted that of the manuscripts and books in the library 'none of them [is] known to be of any special importance.'[1049]

The rejection of these artworks was associated with the low esteem in which westerners held the people creating and worshipping them. In Montague John Rendall's words (British, 1862-1950, visited Horeb before 1911, March 10?-13, ascended to Hagia Koryphē on the 12th):[1050]

> '[t]he Greek hand is a true type of the Greek mind: both are hopelessly mediæval and inelastic.'

The monks, despite being hurt and offended by the disapproval of their visitors,[1051] obviously realised the importance of their icon collection since they had them numbered and catalogued.[1052] Similar care was extended to the manuscripts and the first dedicated library building was erected in 1734.[1053] At approximately the same time the monks became aware of the acquisitiveness of library visitors.[1054] Alexander W. C. Lindsay's ironic tone disguises his *ennui* for the attention of a monk's careful handling of the outstanding *Codex* 204, a Gospel book of imperial provenance illuminated in Constantinople around 1000:[1055]

[1048] Martineau 1848: 312; her Horeb visit on pages 310-34.
[1049] Bartlett 1879: 262-84, quote on page 281.
[1050] Rendall 1911: 128.
[1051] Robinson 1867: 99.
[1052] Jullien 1893: 114.
[1053] During the time of the scholar archbishop Nikēphoros Marthalēs ho Glykys; see Amantos 1953: 62-3; Weitzmann 1980: 155.
[1054] C. Sicard, in 1720, noted the difficulty he had in persuading the monks to open the library because they were suspicious of theft; see Labib 1961: 103-4; Sicard 1982: 132. The first to realise the importance of the Monastery library was the young François-Auguste de Thou (1607-1642), who travelled in 1628 but left no detailed account of his voyage; several scholars were dispatched after him, specifically ordered by the minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619-1683) to remove manuscripts for the royal library of Louis XIV, but they were unsuccessful; see Labib 1961: 108-9.
[1055] Lindsay 1858: 189. The *Codex* 204 was often shown to visitors and the monks were especially

> 'In the archbishop's apartment, now used as the Treasury, we were shown a most beautiful manuscript of the Gospels in Greek, on vellum, in uncial, or capital, letters of gold; I thought the good father would never have done turning over the preliminary leaves of illuminations, and arranging the silk screens interposed between them. Would that it were in the British Museum!'

Miss Platt, writing in 1842, mentioned that an English traveller a little while before her 1839 visit offered 300 (Ottoman?) pounds for this manuscript but the archbishop forbade its sale. She was quick to add:[1056]

> 'Thus English travellers too frequently, by impudently offering such high prices for things of this kind, give to Orientals an impression that they must be of immense value, and consequently at once defeat their object of obtaining possession of them.'

Apart from the aversion of travellers towards the Orthodox clergy, aesthetic preferences undoubtedly influenced their perspective. In contrast to the sumptuousness of Orthodox Christian art, the Protestant Low Church visual standards called for simplicity and in H. Bonar's words 'a high, large, bare, rocky hall would have satisfied our idea of a chapel for Sinai.'[1057] The British Oliver Brockbank, visiting Horeb in 1914, noted that the 'fine old building' of the *katholikon* was 'spoilt with eikons and hundreds of tawdry lamps.'[1058]

The publication in 1846 and 1862 of C. Tischendorf's exciting 'find,' the celebrated *Codex Sinaiticus*, was to be the turning point in the appreciation of the Monastery's holdings by western scholars. Interestingly, the change did not start from one of the superbly illuminated codices but from the most important relic for

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proud of it; see Stephens 1837: 197; Stephens 1970: 288; Dumas 1839a: 89-90; Dumas 1839b: 246; Russegger 1847: 39-40; Bida & Hachette 1864: 12; Stacquez 1865: 355 – a viewing commented to by Labib 1961: 135-6; Ritter 1866: 237-8; Randall 1867: 296; Robinson 1867: 98-9; Loftus 1870: 183; Schaff 1878: 189; Raboisson 1887: 43-4. On *Codex* 204, see Weitzmann & Galavaris 1990: 42-7, figures 92-108, plates III-VIII; Galavares 1990b: 314, figures 3-6 on page 329.

[1056] Platt 1842: 173-4.

[1057] Bonar 1857: 219.

the study of the Bible, the austere fourth-century Greek manuscript preserving the earliest and most complete version of the Holy Scriptures known to date.

The story of the removal of the *Codex* remains a contested issue.[1059] The German scholar arrived at Sinai in 1844 searching for early manuscripts of the Bible. He spotted some leaves of the *Codex* (he claimed they were waiting to stoke the ovens) and stealthily removed forty three of them to Leipzig, where he had them published without mentioning their provenance. He returned in 1853 for the remainder of the manuscript but left empty-handed, probably because of the monks' suspicion.[1060] His third visit, in 1859, was supported by Aleksandr (Alexander) II Nikolaevich, Emperor (tsar) of the Russian Empire (1818-1881, ruled 1855-1881), and yielded results. On the last day of his stay he came across the rest of the manuscript, which the monks had bound into quires.[1061] He asked to remove it to the Cairo priory (Tzouvania) for a closer study and when in Cairo borrowed it with the intention of showing it to his imperial patron. Instead, he presented the book as a gift to the tsar and never returned to Sinai again.[1062]

[1058] Brockbank 1914: 27. On O. Brockbank, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 241.

[1059] For a detailed and interesting recounting of the evidence available to this day, see Bentley 1985. See also Kamil 1991: 63-9; Hobbs 1995: 245-6, 259-60; *Egeria* 2008: 221-2. After the removal of the first leaves of the *Codex Sinaiticus* in 1844, the monks collected and bound together the remaining leaves they were able to collect. This is the volume Tischendorf removed in 1859 and it had hardly been left to perish as he claimed; see Skeat 2000: 313-5. It is expected that research by the international *Codex Sinaiticus* project (www.codexsinaiticus.org) will elucidate the matter for good.

[1060] Kamil 1991: 66.

[1061] In March 1845, a year after Tischendorf removed the first portion of the *Codex Sinaiticus*, the monks refused to show F. A. Strauss the *Codex* 204, a reaction unrecorded by other travellers that was probably connected with the previous year's incident; see Strauss 1848: 159; Strauss 1849: 126. Since medieval times it was forbidden to remove books from the Monastery or the church and curses were scribbled at the margins of manuscripts; see Meimarēs 1985: 17.

[1062] For the first few leaves Tischendorf removed from the Monastery and deposited in the Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig under the name *Codex Frederico-Augustanus*, where they remain to this day, see Tischendorf 1846. For the remaining bulk of the manuscript which he removed to the Imperial Library in Saint Petersburg in February 1859 acting as the tsar of Russia's agent and

Given the care extended by the monks upon their holdings, it is unlikely that they had put the parchment leaves in a basket to be burned in the ovens. However, the important step had been taken for the scholarly community of the West to realise that the main lure of Horeb was not its Biblical landmarks, which only caused interminable controversy, but the Monastery library, which propelled Uspenskiĭ and Tischendorf to professorships, international status, even nobility (in 1869 the tsar awarded the latter the style of 'von' Tischendorf).

In the wake of Tischendorf's sumptuous publications the eminent Egyptologist Heinrich Ferdinand Karl Brugsch (German, 1827-1894) published the few leaves of the *Codex Sinaiticus* remaining in Sinai[1063] and Georg Moritz Ebers (German, 1837-1898) assessed with considerable erudition the importance of the mosaics and the architecture of the Monastery.[1064] When prince Johann Georg, duke of Sachsen (German, 1869-1938), visited Sinai in October 1910, he devoted most of his account to works of art rather than Biblical theories, a sign of a change in orientation among scholars as well as visitors.[1065] A few years later, the 1914 German expedition attempted to produce a systematic catalogue of all the works of art at the Monastery, with a pioneering focus on Islamic material. Their research was sadly dispersed and mostly lost due to the outbreak of World War

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named *Codex Sinaiticus Petropolitanus*, see Tischendorf 1862 (in four volumes). This portion was sold by the Soviet Union to the British state in 1933 for £100,000 and is now in the British Library. Smaller parts of the manuscript remain in the Monastery (they were discovered in 1975 at a built-up cell in the northern wall, see Sophronios 1998: 27-49) and in the National Library of Russia, Saint Petersburg; see *Egeria* 2008: 221-2. Tischendorf's version of the controversy surrounding the 'discovery' of the *Codex* appeared in Tischendorf 1863: 3-24.

[1063] Brugsch 1866: 34-54; Brugsch 1875a; Brugsch 1875b. Brugsch's first recorded visit to the Monastery took place between 1 and 4 May 1865.

[1064] Ebers 1872: 250-379; Ebers & Guthe 1884: 358-410.

[1065] Sachsen 1912: 6-30, plates IV-X.

I.[1066] Since the publication of the Sōtērious' seminal work on the icons in the Monastery, art historians have been making the desert pilgrimage with high hopes of making new discoveries.[1067] Horeb is not any more an uncharted territory hiding traces of the Exodus but a Noah's Ark preserving unique works of art to be published in scholarly studies and exhibited to international audiences.[1068]

5.5. Artists

Thanks to the writings of scholars and aspiring amateurs the Sinai journey found enthusiastic followers who could gain unprecedented access to its natural features and man-made wonders through the works of pictorial artists. Their work, the product of arduous effort under adverse circumstances, was instrumental in making the Horeb localities recognisable throughout the Christian world.[1069]

Rudimentary depictions of the Horeb landscape had been included in pilgrimage accounts printed since the fourteenth century (section 4.2.3, figure 85).[1070] They were little more than sketches, obviously executed from memory after the return of the writer with the aid of an artist who had not attempted the journey. Such sketches combined the stations of the pilgrimage in an abstract mountain setting, a visual enumeration of landmarks rather than the picture of a landscape.

[1066] Schmidt & Moritz 1926: 26-34; Stern 1960: 445; Stern 1964a: 7-10.
[1067] Sōtēriou & Sōtēriou 1956, Sōtēriou & Sōtēriou 1958, in Greek with French abstract. For a brief account of early work on the Monastery library, see Skrobucha 1966: 104. For research on the icons, see Skrobucha 1966: 106-8.
[1068] Howard Crosby Rice, Jr. (American, 1904-1980) narrated in detail the Princeton University Library mission to the Monastery (16 February-15 April 1960, previous missions in the summers of 1956 and 1958) to record icons and manuscripts, but commented very little on the landscape and its history, an attitude shared with most modern scholars; see Rice 1960: 4-8.
[1069] Hobbs 1995: 133-5.

However, by the nineteenth century several more accomplished views were published and some had claims both to artistic merit and a degree of realistic detail. Depictions of 'Mount Sinai' in popular editions of the Bible (figures 115 and 116) assumed a character of accuracy which satisfied a public accustomed to the conventions of modern mapping and topographical views. They were different from earlier illustrations in which the Biblical incident was situated in a nonspecific setting (figure 117). The Sinai landmarks were now presented without Moses or the Israelites, as containers of past Biblical incidents caught in present time through the eyes of contemporary travellers.

The accuracy of even these representations was often flawed since they were not executed on the spot. The view of Hagia Koryphē in figure 118 is based on Frederick Catherwood's (British, 1799-1854) sketch but was drawn for engraving by James Duffield Harding (British, 1798-1863). The elements of the site (chapel, mosque, gateways and steps) are all there, but their placement is arbitrary and confusing.[1071] It is from the late 1830s that precise depictions of the Horeb sites became available to the European and American public through the work of pioneering itinerant artists.

One of the earliest painters to record the Horeb landmarks *en plein air* was the Oxford-educated British Reverend Edward Thomas Daniell (1804-1842) (figures 119 and 120). Well-travelled and talented, he produced, among other views, a valuable watercolour of Hagia Koryphē where one half of an arch from

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[1070] For late medieval depictions of Horeb, see Vilnay 1963: XIV, XVI, 208-12.
[1071] Reproduced in Schiller 1977: 98. On the accuracy of these engravings, see 'The Artists and their Works,' in Schiller 1977: no pagination.

the sixth-century basilica is seen standing to the south of the small chapel (figure 120). Despite its merits, his work was not reproduced in engravings and therefore never became widely known. Francis Arundale's (British, 1807-1853) drawings (figure 121) and W. H. Bartlett's watercolours (figure 122) were engraved and included in books, however the text took precedence over the images.[1072]

Popularity would be the achievement of the Scottish David Roberts, who travelled to the Holy Land, Egypt and Sinai in 1838-1839 and made drawings and watercolours which combined visual accuracy and inspiring atmosphere.[1073] His works were engraved in 1840 by Louis Haghe (British, 1806-1885), published by Sir Fraser Graham Moon, 'Her Majesty's Printseller,'[1074] and met with success with a public eager for exotic landscapes with religious associations.

Comparisons between his works and places which have survived essentially unchanged testify both to the precision of his details and the romanticism of his gaze, which made subjects truly majestic, indeed sublime (figures 123 and 125, in comparison with figures 124 and 126). His view of the Monastery with Horeb in the background remains to this day the most iconic image of the sacred landscape of Mount Sinai (figure 127). His lithograph of Hagia Koryphē (figures 123 and 128) juxtaposed the Muslim mosque and the Christian chapel in a carefully balanced composition which is difficult to achieve (as repeated efforts to replicate it using a camera have demonstrated). The picture was charged with symbolic meaning as the artist placed the Christian and Muslim places of worship opposite each other on the

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[1072] Bartlett 1862 (first published in 1848); Arundale 1837. On Bartlett, see Vilnay 1963: XXIV.
[1073] On Roberts' journeys, see Vilnay 1963: XXIII.
[1074] The prints were first exhibited individually and then published as a five-volume folio series

solid rocks of the 'Mount of the Law' and stressed their ruinous state as a sign of humility. It was also accurate in its depiction of masonry and geophysical features. However, it seems that the very magnificence of the landscape, the panoramic expanse of void around the modest remains was Roberts' focus. In this, his vision approaches the vision of A. Dauzats, who in 1830 recorded with dramatic sublimity the walls of the Monastery (figure 129). Both artists painted 'the terrible wilderness,' a Biblical narrative set in stone.

The American painter Miner Kilbourne Kellogg (1814-1889)[1075] visited Sinai in February and March 1844 and sketched Hagia Koryphē from Hagia Epistēmē on 6 March. Horeb was just one of the stations in his 24-year long journey in Europe and the Near East, a journey inspired both by American patriotism and Swedenborgian religious fervour.[1076] In his travels he produced a large body of work, mostly sketches in pencil, watercolour and oil (figures 131 and 132), later to be reinterpreted in large compositions in oil on canvas (figures 130 and 133). His own image was often included in the composition, as an added note, a piece of evidence of his actual presence at the place depicted.[1077] In the watercolour of the Prophētēs Hēlias chapel (figure 131) the figures of Kellogg and his attendant are

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between 1842 and 1849; see Roberts 1842-9.

[1075] Kellogg 1848; on M. K. Kellogg, see Davis 1996: 101-26.

[1076] Davis 1996: 102-6.

[1077] Davis 1996: 110-11, 121-4. John Davis, in his effort to explain the discrepancy between the topographical accuracy of Kellogg's views and his Swedenborgian beliefs, built an incisive argument based on the position in which the artist placed himself in the painting. By concentrating on his own thoughts rather than opening his gaze to the panorama in front of him, Kellogg was meant to symbolise 'enlightenment and knowledge.' However fascinating this argument may be, the '*Top of Mount Sinai*' referred to in the painting's title is not where the painter sits but the summit visible on the left hand side of the canvas. From his position, behind the chapel of Prophētēs Hēlias, Kellogg would only be able to see a wall of bare rock. Nevertheless, Davis' proposed explanation of *Mount Sinai and the Valley of Es-Seba'îyeh* through Swedenborgian theology is fascinating; see Davis 1996: 124-5.

missing, only to be added in the finished oil on canvas version (figure 130). His ambitious agenda aimed to expand the horizons of the American public using his experience and the visual material he collected in his travels, either works of his own or others.[1078] Even though his plans remained unfulfilled, he embodied the missionary artist ideal better than any of his contemporaries.

One of the first works Kellogg completed after his return to the United States in 1865 was the now lost canvas *Mount Sinai and the Valley of Es-Seba'îyeh* (figure 133), a visual statement not only of his experiences in the Holy Land but also of his convictions as to the identification of Biblical landmarks with actual places: although accepting Hagia Koryphē as the 'Mount of the Law,' Kellogg added his own idea in the debate, dismissing al-Rāha as the 'Plain of the Encampment' of the wandering Jews and proposing a valley to the east of Horeb (visible on figure 6 to the left of Hagia Aikaterinē).[1079] The painting materialised not only his memories from the place but also his convictions about it, expressing in line and colour an argument of Biblical scholarship. He even used it in public lectures delivered between 1867 and 1870 as illustrative material, proof of the soundness of his contribution to scriptural geography.[1080]

Kellogg's example demonstrates that, in the heated controversy of Biblical identifications, the subject, angle, size and orientation of the subject matter of a seemingly innocuous painting assumed the active role of an argument. The contemporary critical acclaim for his rather dry work was due less to its artistic

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[1078] Davis 1996: 101-2.
[1079] Kellogg 1848: 45-6. The idea had been suggested at about the same time by Carl Ritter; see Ritter 1848; Ritter 1866: 218-25.

merits and more to its importance as evidence of the actual whereabouts of a contested Biblical incident, the Jewish encampment.[1081]

Admiration similar to that bestowed upon Kellogg's paintings in America was expressed across the Atlantic for the works of John Frederick Lewis (British, 1805-1876), exhibited in Britain at approximately the same time. His work *A Frank Encampment in the Desert of Mount Sinai, 1842 – The Convent of Saint Catherine in the distance* (figure 134), executed in 1856, presented an Orientalist vision of a languid English visitor (Frederick William Stewart, 1805-1872) relaxing in Arab dress under a tent.[1082] Even though the Horeb landscape was secondary in visual terms, the location ('*Desert of Mount Sinai*,' '*The Convent of Saint Catherine*') occupied most of the title. It seems that the Biblical setting heightened the importance of the scene and gave it an added *gravitas* in the eyes of Victorian viewers.

Less known today than Roberts' prints or Kellogg's paintings but popular in their time nevertheless were the engravings accompanying G. H. von Schubert's work on the Holy Land (figure 135), executed after paintings by Johann Martin Bernatz (German, 1802-1878).[1083] The panorama of the view from Hagia Koryphē in their 1839 and 1856 editions (larger format in the former, coloured and with trilingual legend in the latter) remains a valuable source for the archaeology of the site, although the artist used the roof of the chapel as a standpoint, thus excluding it from the frame (figure 136). The possibility of artistic freedom should not be

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[1080] Davis 1996: 115-26.
[1081] Davis 1996: 118.
[1082] Llewellyn & Newton 2001: 37-39, figure 1; Weeks 2001: 187, figure 23.
[1083] Schubert & Bernatz 1839: plates 6, 7 and 8; Schubert *et al.* 1856: plates 10 and 11. For Schubert's narrative of his journey, see Schubert 1839: 307-55; for another album, see Schubert *et*

excluded given the romantic style of Bernatz's work, not dissimilar to the style of Roberts. But the ruins and standing buildings can be identified in their right places, for example the mosque (figure 137). In Bernatz's engravings the shift was made from the sublime (Roberts) and the didactic (Kellogg) to the accurate, a move which would soon be completed with the use of the new medium of photography.

The first noteworthy photographer to work at South Sinai was Francis Frith, a prolific artist who travelled to the Holy Land in 1856-1857 and created large format views extremely popular with researchers and armchair tourists alike (figures 138-141). Frith had to overcome unforeseen impediments but the volume and quality of the work he managed to produce is admirable.[1084] When it came to the text accompanying his beautiful albumen prints, Reginald Stuart Poole (British, 1832-1895), an archaeologist, offered the necessary scholarly authority to the publication.[1085] For the first time Horeb was recorded in detail and the only interference by the artist was the placing of his camera. However, the Sinaitic desert did not disappoint its public. There was no squalor or ugly buildings to hide or picturesque poverty to forget (as was the case of the Jerusalem or Cairo city views), only the clean, awe-inspiring rock formations, as sublime as in Roberts' engravings.

James MacDonald, the photographer of the *Ordnance Survey*, also recorded the localities of Horeb in 1868-1869.[1086] His views worked together with the texts of scholars and the line drawings and maps of draughtsmen and were 'drier' but

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al. 1868: plate 5 for Hagia Koryphē. For J. M. Bernatz, see Vilnay 1963: XXIII.

[1084] He recorded that the collodion he used on his plates boiled when the temperature in his dark tent reached 54 degrees Celsius; see Vaczek & Buckland 1981: no pagination; Williams 1998: 172.

[1085] Frith *et al.* 1860a; Frith *et al.* 1860b. On F. Frith, see Williams 1998: 168-78.

[1086] On J. MacDonald, see Howe 1997: 40-4.

no less accomplished than Frith's.[1087] Despite the spread of photographic reproductions in the 1850s and the pioneering work of Frith and MacDonald, books richly illustrated with engravings remained popular.[1088] The British Reverend Samuel Manning's (1822-1881) *The Land of the Pharaohs. Egypt and Sinai: Illustrated by Pen and Pencil*, first published in 1875, featured many picturesque images and was translated into French and German.[1089]

Roberts, Kellogg, Bernatz, Frith and MacDonald used their first-hand experience of Horeb and the possibilities offered by their media (watercolour, oil painting, lithography and photography) to produce works of art which were at once sources of information, arguments for scholarship, materials for metaphysical contemplation, tourist enticements and statements on the essence of the Sinaitic landscape. Their views of Horeb succeeded in embedding specific vistas into popular imagination, even if they were distinctly individual (as in the case of Roberts' *Summit of Mount Sinai* engraving). They made the rocks of Horeb a familiar icon, instantly recognisable thanks to its attributes: barren expanses of desert, vertical cliff faces, panoramas across mountain tops, strategically placed lonely trees, humble traces of human piety. This visual vocabulary was created between the 1830s and 1870s but is alive and used to this day.

[1087] Vaczek & Buckland 1981: no pagination.
[1088] Vilnay 1963: XXVI-XXVII.
[1089] Manning 1875: 214-21. On S. Manning, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 245-6.

5.6. Tourists

Despite the frequently negative proclamations of scholars and savants, Hagia Koryphē remained a perennial favourite among adventurous travellers. Since the 1830s popular magazines abridged detailed accounts, like the one by J. L. Burckhardt, in order to familiarise their audience with a destination which combined religious interest with the allure of the exotic (figure 142).[1090] The London publishing firm of John Murray (founded in 1768) produced the first handbooks for the intrepid tourist from 1843 onwards[1091] and the travel agents Henry Gaze & Sons had already organised three Holy Land tours by 1868.[1092]

However, it was Thomas Cook (British, 1808-1892) who made the Holy Land and Sinai so popular with the affluent middle classes of Britain and other countries.[1093] His reconnaissance tour in the Near East took place in 1868 and the first tourists followed the next year.[1094] Sinai was in Cook's tour schedule from the start and the word 'Sinai' appeared on the cover of his *Programmes of Personally-Conducted and Independent Palestine Tours ... for the Season of 1874-5* in larger lettering than any other place name, even Italy.[1095] The railway connecting Cairo and Suez (since 1855) had made the journey easier, safer and faster.[1096]

[1090] Kitto 1835a: 433-4; Kitto 1835b: 449-52.
[1091] Wilkinson 1843: 396-417; Wilkinson 1847: 212-20; Moscrop 2000: 46. Tourists and travellers who visited Sinai before the 'Thomas Cook Age' included: John Hyde, British, died 1825, visited Horeb in 1819; Charles Didier, Swiss, 1805-1864, visited Horeb in 1845; Catherine Tobin, British, visited Horeb in 1853; Robert Walter Stewart, British, visited Horeb in 1854; Francis Conyngham with his wife, English, visited Horeb in 1868; for these travellers, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 18, 59-60, 64-5, 74-5, 76, 93-4, 104, 105-6, 110-11, 112, 122, 139, 146, 151-2, 175, 178-9, 197-8, 222, 234, 241, 244, 249
[1092] Brendon 1992: 120.
[1093] Labib 1961: 137, 144-5.
[1094] Brendon 1992: 124-6.
[1095] Cook 1874. For an extended section on Sinai, see Cook 1897: 310-8.
[1096] Labib 1961: 143.

The 'Cookii,' as the Bedouin nicknamed them, opted for camping outside the Monastery walls and enjoyed familiar delicacies like Yorkshire bacon and potted salmon,[1097] usually included in the agent's fee.[1098] French visitors unsurprisingly enjoyed a better diet:[1099]

> 'Two soups, four first courses, three roasts, salads, various puddings, and on top of all that unlimited mustard. It was a first class wedding meal with *bombe glacée à la manne*!' **(Text LXXVII)**

Their fare was fundamentally different from the very severe eating habits of the monks who abstained from most foods every Monday, Wednesday, Friday, through several fasting periods and in Lent.[1100] The Monastery kitchens must have also catered to the needs of visitors (as in the case of Miss Platt, see section 5.1.2), something seldom noted or appreciated.[1101]

When on Hagia Koryphē, options were limited but the bold enjoyed their food as well.[1102] The Reverend George Fisk (British, visited Horeb on 21-25 May 1842, ascended Hagia Koryphē on the 23rd) described a meal of 'very coarse brown bread, goat's milk cheese, black olives dressed in oil, delicious coffee, fresh water

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[1097] Brendon 1992: 132.
[1098] Hornby 1907: 52.
[1099] Author's translation. See also Dumas 1839a: 86; Dumas 1839b: 224.
[1100] Pococke 1814: 291:

> 'They never eat flesh, and in lent, nothing that is the produce of flesh, as cheese or the like; and they are permitted to eat oil and shell-fish only on Saturdays, Sundays, and feast days, in lent; ... and any one may conclude how coarsely they fare, when I hardly saw any other dishes there than rice ill dressed with oil, vinegar, and onions, and sometimes with onions and dried fish, the same sort of fish dressed in a soup, dried horse beans sodden in water, sallad, and cheese.'

My personal experience of the Monastery diet in Lent 1998 closely resembled Pococke's in 1739.
[1101] Pococke 1814: 292.
[1102] Dumas 1839a: 99; Dumas 1839b: 257; Ernst Christof Döbel, visiting Horeb between 27 October and 6 November 1833, ascended Hagia Koryphē on 28 or 29 October, see Döbel 1842: 22-4; Borrer 1845: 328; (Amedée) de Damas 1864: 256; Bensly 1896: 151:

> 'Do not think that we were insensible to the spiritual charms of the mountain, but climbing it had been an arduous task, and for the moment food and rest were our chief desire.'

from the spring, and a little flask of date spirit to qualify it.'[1103] The Reverend David Austin Randall (American, 1813-1884, at Horeb 3-6 March 1861, at Hagia Koryphē on the 4th) got arak, dried dates and figs, brown bread and coffee.[1104] Paul Lenoir (French, 1826-1881, visiting Horeb *circa* 1868) had breakfast, coffee and liqueurs in what was the best Hagia Koryphē picnic ever.[1105] He even complained that it was unlikely that the crows fed the Monastery's stale bread to the prophet Elijah (1 *Kings* 17) and suggested that the birds were fattening the godly man to eat him themselves – without bread.[1106] H. T. J. Stacquez refused to believe the same bread was not granite until he actually held it in hand.[1107] His menu included hard-boiled eggs, oranges, date preserve and coffee.[1108]

Isabella Bird (British, 1831-1904, at Sinai in 1878 or later), despite abstaining from food herself, found traces of a rather elegant meal, including an empty champagne bottle which 'profaned this summit.' She 'threw it with indignation over the southern precipice more than 1,000 feet in depth.'[1109] Finally, M. J. Rendall had brown bread, almonds, raisins and water.[1110]

It was probably these European, especially British, travellers who brought with them transfer-printed stoneware vessels, the sherds of which appear on Hagia Koryphē and testify to meals served in style on Staffordshire tableware (figures 143-145). Similar wares produced in England were even decorated with prints

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[1103] Fisk 1843: 159.
[1104] Randall 1867: 313, 319.
[1105] Lenoir 1872: 250-1.
[1106] Lenoir 1872: 251.
[1107] Stacquez 1865: 358.
[1108] Stacquez 1865: 366.
[1109] Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 223. On I. Bird (Bishop), see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 240.

bearing Sinai-inspired names, like 'Horeb' (figure 146). When in the Monastery, the souvenirs which could be purchased to commemorate a visit included 'sausages of Sinai dates, with almonds, araki, villanous Crete wine, and little silver rings, blessed at St. Catharine's shrine; ... also were to be bought little boxes of manna, and mandrepores, and star-fish from Tor.'[1111]

The lists of royals and nobles added to the end of Cook's guidebooks testify to the elevated status of the travellers,[1112] and the Monastery's visitors' book came to read like a royal register.[1113] Another classic guidebook was published by the German house of Karl Baedeker and was promptly translated into English. It included coloured maps, detailed descriptions and called the journey to Sinai 'the most interesting of Oriental expeditions.'[1114] French equivalents include the *Descriptive, historical and archaeological itinerary of the East* [...] by Émile Isambert, published in 1881 in the *Guides Joanne* series[1115] and Barnabé Meistermann's 1909 guidebook (section 3.3.1.2).[1116] Periklēs Grēgoriadēs' Greek *The Holy Monastery of Sinai according to its topographical, historical and administrative aspects*, published in Jerusalem in 1875,[1117] was a richly detailed book only accessible to a small, modern Greek-speaking audience.

[1110] Rendall 1911: 142.
[1111] Hamilton 1993: 22 (first published in 1857).
[1112] Cook 1899. The Prince of Wales, future king Edward VII (1841-1910), visited the Holy Land in February-June 1862 under the guidance of A. P. Stanley.
[1113] Bensly 1896: 159; Zachos 1937: 33-4. Important royal visitors also included Louis-Philippe-Albert of Orléans, count of Paris (1838-1894) and his brother Robert-Philippe, duke of Chartres (1840-1910) who travelled to the Monastery in great style in 1860; see Labib 1961: 132-3.
[1114] Baedeker 1878: 459-513, quote on page 459; Baedeker 1895: 230-80, quote on page 230.
[1115] Isambert 1881: 718-36. The *Guides Joanne* series was the work of French publisher Adolphe-Laurent Joanne (1813-1881). See also Labib 1961: 145.
[1116] Meistermann 1909.
[1117] Grēgoriadēs 1875.

The fathers of the Monastery adapted to the stream of visitors admirably well.[1118] When William Charles Maughan (British, died 1914, visiting Horeb between 29 February and 4 March 1872, at Hagia Koryphē on the 2nd) was robbed of his gold by Bedouin and had to cash a cheque at the Monastery, he noted:[1119]

> '... considering that the monks knew nothing of us, and that, although the magic autograph of Messrs. Coutts & Co. at the foot of a bill is held in profound respect on all the exchanges of Europe, still their operations hardly extend to the wilderness of Sinai; when one took these circumstances into view, the monks might well have declined the transaction.'

Of course, the monks had centuries of experience in pilgrimage[1120] and even though resentful Europeans complained about the service, one has to be reminded that the bulk of visitors consisted of Russian pilgrims.[1121]

By the last years before World War I the British rulers of Egypt would casually carry themselves in 'Jæger waistcoats, mackintoshes, and thick dressing gowns' round the desert.[1122] They even offered afternoon tea to monks, who 'did not understand that sort of meal at all.'[1123] However, by 1899, when E. Hornby offered them tea, biscuits, raisins, coffee with a nip of whiskey and cigarettes, monks seem to be fairly well acquainted with the etiquette.[1124] Piety was combined with curiosity and frugality with comfort by these precursors of modern

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[1118] J. Hamilton (visited Horeb in 1854) gave details of the prices for various services charged by the monks: a visit to Hagia Koryphē cost one dollar; see Hamilton 1993: 21.
[1119] Maughan 1873: 128; for his Horeb visit, see Maughan 1873: 73-102.
[1120] Zachos 1937: 12.
[1121] On Russian travellers to Sinai from the sixteenth century onwards, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 65, 212, 244 (for N. P. Kondokoff and Triphon Korobeinikoff, *circa* 1582-1594), 160, 243 (for Basil Gogara, *circa* 1634), 191, 250 (for Hippolyte Vichensky, *circa* 1708?) and 164, 247 (for B. Ouspensky, *circa* 1845?). The names and dates of these pilgrims were sometimes confused in this book and no bibliographical references were given. See also Labib 1961: 142.
[1122] Sutton 1913: 90-112, plates 40-59. On late Victorian tourists, see Hobbs 1995: 248-54.
[1123] Edward North Buxton (British, 1840-1924, visited Horeb between 15 and 17 February 1894, ascended Hagia Koryphē on the 17th, the visit of his account written by Hannah Maud Buxton), see Buxton *et al.* 1895: 126-38, quote on page 134.

tourists.[1125] They advertised their adventures on postcards printed with views of by now familiar landmarks of South Sinai (figure 147).

The end of the Great War in 1918 also marked the conclusion of an era of adventurous travel. Cars covered the distance from Cairo to Horeb in a fraction of the time it took on camelback.[1126] When Agamemnōn Zachos (Greek, visiting Horeb between 25 August and 14 September 1925, at Hagia Koryphē on August 31) examined the visitors' book, he found it occupied by names of British tourists (633 out of 1935), Indian and British soldiers (341) and only a modest number of Russians (220), Americans (190), French (153) and Greeks (59). The small number of Russians must be due to the revolution of 1917 which did much damage to the Monastery's pilgrim traffic.[1127]

People attempting the less than arduous, indeed quite safe, journey were pilgrims (the Greeks and Russians mainly fall in this category), art historians, palaeographers, tourists or simply curious intellectuals in search of alternative lifestyles. Their stance towards the Sinai clergy was positive overall.[1128] The splendid works of interwar British travel literature by Henry Vollam Morton (1892-1979) and Louis Golding (1895-1958) contemplated the austerity of

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[1124] Hornby 1907: 44.
[1125] Kamil 1991: 33-4.
[1126] A British man named MacMahon was the first to reach the Monastery by car; see Zachos 1937: 82.
[1127] Dobson 1925: 83.
[1128] Even Claude Scudamore Jarvis (British, 1879-1952), governor of Sinai from 1923 to 1936 and as paternalistic as an imperialist could be, was quick to admit that 'one cannot dismiss the monks of Mount Sinai without a testimony to their wondrous hospitality and kindness;' see Jarvis 1931: 230. Jarvis also recorded his Sinai experience in Jarvis 1938 and Jarvis 1939. On C. S. Jarvis, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 244. For an amusing story of Jarvis' attitude towards the monks, see Rabino 1938: 56 note 1.

monastic life with thoughtful sympathy.[1129] However, none of the above groups focused on Hagia Koryphē in particular. It was just another feature of the Horeb landscape, a picturesque destination among several others, which had the added attractions of being less known and more exotic.[1130] In recent times, environmentalists and the Monastery have striven to limit the flood of tourists who ascend to the mountain, reaching a few hundred per day.[1131] They go there for the majestic view and the Biblical echoes but are mostly unaware of the long history of visitation and worship. The mass adoration of art objects and ease of travel have obscured the religious significance of the place, 'for the Holy Mountain is a spiritual, not a physical experience.'[1132]

5.7. Conclusion

The nineteenth century was the last stage in the 'biography' of Hagia Koryphē, a major turning point of an interreligious pilgrimage destination into an archaeological site and then into a tourist attraction. The backwater that Sinai had become in the eyes of the western world during the seventeenth and the eighteenth century owing to the Reformation of the Catholic Church and the popularity of global sea travel was brought back into the focus of the scholarly and artistic communities and the general public.

[1129] Morton 1938; Golding 1938: 270-345. On H. V. Morton, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 246; on L. Golding, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 243. Paul Gotch's (1915-2008) travel book and Hugh John Llewellyn Beadnell's (1874-1944) 'exploration' narrative are also worth a mention; see Gotch 1945: 12-28; Beadnell 1927: 164-74. On H. J. L. Beadnell, see Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 240.
[1130] On Holy Land pilgrimage sites as viewed by the interwar British, see Sherman 1997: 30-1.
[1131] Hobbs 1995: 261-88; Hobbs 1996: 1-21; Alexander 2001: 60-6.

The first stimulus was the search for 'Sinaitic' inscriptions on desert rocks. Although they had been associated with the Old Testament narrative of *Exodus* since the Early Christian period (section 2.1), their Biblical connection was only put under scrutiny in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century by people collecting and trying to decipher them. The bizarre theories advocated by some created a pattern which would be repeated again in later decades (section 5.1.1). By the 1840s the Jews were finally dissociated with the inscriptions but a new controversy had already started, questioning this time the identification of Hagia Koryphē with the Biblical 'Mount of the Law.' Scholars and explorers, tourists and artists criss-crossed the peninsula on foot and camelback in search of the best candidate for the sacred location.

The reasons why there should be an alternative Mount Sinai at all relate to the state of Biblical studies in nineteenth-century Western Europe. Protestant theologians in Germany, Britain and the United States advocated critique over tradition, independent worship over the established Church (*Sola Fide*), private study of the Bible over accepted exegeses (*Sola Scriptura*) and scientific rigour over 'blind' belief. Protestant churches were also keen to get their own strongholds at the Holy Land, untainted by heterodox associations and discovered with the help of the above principles. The paradoxical claim that the metaphysical phenomena related in the book of *Exodus* could be clarified using quasi-scientific methods based on sensory experience was typical of the way theologians tried to balance faith and the principles of post-Enlightenment positivism. Therefore, it is

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[1132] Golding 1938: 341.

not surprising that most of the doubters of Hagia Koryphē were Protestant and came from Germany, Britain and America (section 5.1.2).

Apart from religious convictions, political, economic and military motives supported organised scholarly projects (section 5.2.4) and individual explorers (section 5.1.2). The Suez Canal between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea was the first large-scale enterprise to facilitate international military campaigns and trade. Its strategic role attracted soldiers, spies and businessmen in the Sinai desert, usually under the guise of Biblical exploration. Egypt was one of the first lands of the Ottoman Empire to be included within a colonialist empire and the maps drafted by 'Mount of the Law' enthusiasts even before the 1880s aided its administration and development.

The volume of publications describing the Sinaitic desert and especially the localities of Horeb was such that the Berlin Professor Carl Ritter (German, 1779-1859) was able to write by 1848 hundreds of pages on Sinaitic landmarks without ever having visited the place.[1133] His digested account was so popular that almost twenty years later it was translated and published in England,[1134] at the height of the 'Mount of the Law controversy' and only three years before the ultimate work of exodial topography, the *Ordnance Survey of the Peninsula of Sinai* (section 5.2.4).

The background of the *Ordnance Survey* was indicative of the complex motivations behind the 'Mount of the Law' controversy. The mixture of scholars,

[1133] Ritter 1848.
[1134] Ritter 1866: 1-253.

soldiers, clerics and adventurers that comprised the *Survey* team embodied the aspirations and convictions of Victorian imperialist policy (5.2.4). On the other hand, the eccentric Dr Charles Beke represented the passionate amateur who followed his own groundbreaking views despite scholarly rejection (section 5.2.5). This species was ideally embodied by the German businessman Heinrich Schliemann (1822-1890) who in the 1870s successfully identified and excavated Homeric Troy and Mycenae. His British counterpart was less fortunate and his contributions have been forgotten since.

The reports of this extensive geographical and textual research, published in English and German and often translated from one language into the other, were not as innocuous and detached as their learned character suggested. Feelings of religious, cultural and racial superiority translated into abuse against the monks of the Monastery of Saint Catherine, deemed to be avaricious, ignorant, deceitful and unable to spread the word of militant Christianity (sections 5.1.2, 5.2.5 and 5.4). Offensive comments extended even beyond the grave:[1135]

> 'When a monk dies he is buried for one year, after which his withered mask, as empty as the life it lived, is disinterred, and added to the ghastly stack which has been slowly piling up for a thousand years.'

The anti-monastic feelings of Protestant writers sanctioned in their eyes the acts of C. Tischendorf, the Biblical scholar who removed the *Codex Sinaiticus* from the Monastery library:[1136]

> I, for one, am glad that the great White Father of the north [the tsar] borrowed, and forgot to return, the chief treasure which it [the library] contained.

[1135] Buxton 1898: 148.
[1136] Buxton 1898: 148-9.

The 'end-justifies-means' mentality of the scholarly establishment supported Tischendorf in his defiance to the Monastery's calls to return the *Codex* because:[1137]

> '... these ignorant monks could never have made use of it, and Biblical scholars could not travel to Mount Sinai to examine it. [...] They lead a simple, temperate life, idle, monotonous, and stupid life.'

It mattered little if the manuscript was Tischendorf's in the first place and if he could 'present' it to Alexander II, tsar of Russia. What mattered was that he 'rescued' the priceless relic from its 'medieval prison' for the enlightened world of western academia.

It was a short step from the general contempt for the Sinai monastic community to the rejection of all the traditions they had preserved and Hagia Koryphē's identification with the 'Mount of the Law' was the most questioned one. Sinai had to be discovered by Protestant scholars using their Bibles and should not be tainted with Oriental superstition. It would be untouched since the time of Moses, to be worshipped and preferably owned as well by the illuminated West. To this end, every traveller had to review the bibliography, visit all the candidate sites and record his memories in a journal which would end with a customary diatribe suggesting his preferred 'Mount of the Law.'

The connection between anti-monastic feelings, western cultural superiority and Protestant Biblical criticism is best demonstrated when the accounts of Roman Catholic visitors are examined. Their heterodox views and traditional animosity towards the Orthodox clergy should have aligned them with Protestants.

[1137] Schaff 1878: 191-2. P. Schaff was professor of Biblical Learning at the Union Theological

However, this was rarely the case. They focused on the long tradition of pilgrimage and generally accepted the Hagia Koryphē candidacy. The same was true for female visitors of all Christian dogmas, although the reasons for their attitude were more complex: they conformed to ideals of ladylike behaviour, responded to alternative stimuli and allowed their sensitivities to go beyond polemical issues of Biblical topography which obsessed their male companions (section 5.1.2).

Despite doubts of its Biblical past, Hagia Koryphē remained a popular destination for audacious tourists who were attracted to its long history and natural beauty (section 5.6). The image of Horeb became familiar throughout Christendom thanks to the multitude of paintings, engravings and photographs depicting it (section 5.5). Artists made open-air sketches and took long-exposure photographs trying to captivate the sublime views of the Old Testament site. Their gaze was not neutral, indeed some of them engaged in the 'Mount of the Law controversy' and contributed to the wider public's understanding of the debate through the viewpoints they chose for their works.

The search for the 'Mount of the Law' continues to this day. Biblical scouts are reconnoitring sites and possible locations are being proposed, Hagia Koryphē being one among them, although not a popular one (section 2.2). Attention has shifted since the late 1860s and early 1870s: art historians and philologists are investigating the Monastery library, icon store and mosaics instead of climbing mountain tops. This change of focus is due to the pioneering work of a few art historians and Biblical scholars. Several of them originated from Russia, a

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Seminary, New York, and an eminent Biblical scholar of the time.

Christian Orthodox country with a long tradition in Byzantine studies (section 5.3), and their works brought to the attention of the scholarly community both the vibrant intellectual history of Sinaitic clergy (section 5.3) and the importance of the relics they preserved within their monastic enclave.

Admiration for artefacts went as far as arranging their removal to the metropolis of Eastern Christianity, Saint Petersburg, an act seen as re-appropriation rather than larceny by the Russian imperialist establishment (section 5.4). The most famous example of a 're-appropriated' treasure is the *Codex Sinaiticus* manuscript by C. Tischendorf who eventually presented its largest portion to the tsar in lieu of a title.

The *Codex Sinaiticus* affair was a turning point for the fates of both the Monastery and Hagia Koryphē (section 5.4). It marked the nadir of ill-treatment of the monks by their guests, since verbal abuse gave way to their deprivation of their greatest treasure. It was not the first time that items had been removed from the library or the chapels, since Uspenskiĭ had already taken some icons (sections 5.3 and 5.4). Even before him, in 1815, William John Bankes (British, 1786-1855) had removed manuscripts, which were (surprisingly) returned to the Monastery.[1138]

However, the *Codex* was beyond comparison with anything previously discovered and coincided well with the nineteenth-century obsession with the Bible. It stimulated the interest of the scholarly community in the manuscripts of the Monastery. Finally, it shifted the specialists' and public's attention from

[1138] Turner 1820: 443-4 note *. On W. J. Bankes of Kingston Lacy, see Usick 1998: 52, 55; Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 239.

scriptural identifications to medieval artefacts housed in the 'living museum' at Horeb's foot, not any more a Botany Bay of ignorant monks but a treasure house ripe for the picking of the illuminated few.

At the same time that Tischendorf was publishing his discourse on the first instalment of the *Codex* he took to Leipzig, the following passage from the novel *Tancred* was being written. Benjamin Disraeli's (British, 1804-1881) lines epitomised the Victorian fascination with Sinai. However, his vision was individual for his time. Ignoring those questions of exodial topography which preoccupied contemporary Sinaitic bibliography, unaware of the preoccupations with Biblical textual history that would come to monopolise it soon, his text perceived Hagia Koryphē as the focus of an ancient tradition. The imagination of the writer, later British prime minister, was set alight with religious fervour and surrendered to the sublime beauty and romantic associations of a landscape he never visited. In this, he touched the essence of the Hagia Koryphē romance:[1139]

> 'Between the Egyptian and Arabian deserts, formed by two gulfs of the Erythræan sea, is a peninsula of granite mountains. It seems as if an ocean of lava, when its waves were literally running mountains high, had been suddenly commanded to stand still. These successive summits, with their peaks and pinnacles, enclose a series of valleys, in general stern and savage, yet some of which are not devoid of pastoral beauty. There maybe found brooks of silver brightness, and occasionally groves of palms and gardens of dates, while the neighbouring heights command sublime landscapes, the

[1139] Disraeli 1847: 240-1. Alexandre Dumas was another famous writer that wrote a popular book on eastern travel including Sinai without ever having been there; see Dumas 1839a (probably originally published in 1838). He based his writings on the notebooks of the painter A. Dauzats (section 5.5). The abridged English translation (Dumas 1839b), from as early as the title page, typically focused on the alleged Biblical discoveries of Dumas' literary text: '*Including a Visit to Mount Horeb, and Other Localities of the Exodus, Translated, Corrected and Abridged from the French by a Biblical Student.*' For the Horeb 'visit,' Dumas 1839b: 214-74. On A. Dumas and A. Dauzats, see Labib 1961: 116-8; Vilnay 1963: XXII; Taymanova 1998: 182-7; Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 242. Another popular work of orientalist literature with a Horeb chapter was Pierre Loti's (1850-1923) *Le désert*, first published in 1895, narrating a journey actually taken by the author in 1894; see Loti 1895: 42-78. On P. Loti, see Labib 1961: 140; Manley & Abdel-Hakim 2006: 245.

opposing mountains of Asia and of Africa, and the blue bosom of two seas. On one of these elevations, more than five thousand feet above the ocean, is a convent; again, nearly three thousand feet above this convent, is a towering peak, and this is Mount Sinai.

On the top of Mount Sinai are two ruins, a Christian church and a Mahometan mosque. In this, the sublimest scene of Arabian glory, Israel and Ishmael alike raised their altars to the great God of Abraham. Why are they in ruins? Is it that human structures are not to be endured amid the awful temples of nature and revelation; and that the column and the cupola crumble into nothingness in sight of the hallowed Horeb and on the soil of the eternal Sinai?

Ascending the mountain, about half way between the convent and the utmost height of the towering peak, is a small plain surrounded by rocks. In its centre are a cypress tree and a fountain. This is the traditional scene of the greatest event of time.'

6. EPILOGUE

The 'Mount of the Law controversy' was the last chapter in the 'biography' of Hagia Koryphē. Not in the sense that Mount Sinai's original location was discovered, since scholars are still looking for it, and not because Horeb was abandoned, as it is now more visited than ever before. It was the last chapter because the ways of perceiving and using the site have remained unchanged since. Involved parties follow the same patterns of action: monks observe, Bedouin accommodate, believers pray, doubters question, scholars study and tourists sightsee.

It could be argued that Hagia Koryphē, 'Mount Sinai,' inspired the efforts of the State of Israel to annex the Sinai Peninsula and thus assumed a further, political role. However, this would lead into a field of enquiry outside the scope of the thesis. One of the popular incentives for the operations was indeed the 're-possession' of the 'Mount of the Law' (section 4.2.2.1, figure 148) but the strategic and economic realities which dictated armed action had little to do with Biblical landmarks. The approach of Israeli archaeologists active during the years of the occupation was mostly pragmatic and resulted in high-quality contributions.

Even the recent excavation, investigating in unprecedented depth Hagia Koryphē's material record, affected very little the importance or meaning of the site. It just translated a narrative of religious devotion and centuries-old tradition into categories of cultural management and tourist development. As will be

discussed in section 6.1, archaeological reports simply expressed in twenty-first-century parlance that the site was unique, significant and worth protecting.[1140]

In previous chapters the stages of Hagia Koryphē's 'biography' were detailed. It was created from the bringing together of an actual and a textual place, from the identification of the 'Mount of the Law' with a particular summit. Early into its history it acquired the characteristics of sacredness, preeminence, protection and (selective) inaccessibility. Its role as a pilgrimage destination was promoted by an imperial building programme which monumentalised the summit and its surroundings and ensured their defence. In the following centuries the summit expanded its audience across three religions and became the solid core around which a distinct Sinaitic identity was forged. Finally, in the nineteenth century it experienced an outburst of scholarly attention before reverting to its ancient qualities and function.

What makes Hagia Koryphē interesting for the scholar, fascinating for the visitor and hallowed for the believer is the layering of worship, the stratigraphy of devotion. The place continues to inspire awe, to be seen as a refuge and to attract pilgrims. The immutability of its rituals is the measure of its importance. Arguably, some prohibitions are not respected any more and the night-time *avaton* is breached almost daily. Modernity denies or ignores tradition. For some, Hagia Koryphē is just a mountaintop. For most, it remains a holy place.

This thesis surveyed the summit's history and discussed it for the first time within an interdisciplinary framework, integrating non-western scholarship and

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[1140] Development plans, like the much-publicised funicular to the summit, had already been discouraged by international outcry; see Hobbs 1995: 289-309.

obscure post-medieval sources. It revisited well-known texts and expanded the scope of the Justinianic building programme. It revised long-held opinions on Islamic pilgrimage and patronage. It introduced the concept of a Sinaitic identity based on monastic tradition. It followed the survival and refutation of ancient beliefs and rituals. Finally, it demonstrated the central place of Hagia Koryphē throughout Sinai's bimillennial history.

6.1. The Hagia Koryphē excavation and the future of the site

> 'At last this miracle also ceased, either because the age of miracles was past, or because miracles had been abused, or because man's unworthiness and sins hindered the miracles from being wrought, or because God provided other means, since it is the rule of theologians that God does not work miracles unless there be an especial need thereof.' **(Text LXXVIII)**
>
> Felix Fabri of Ulm, thoughts in the presence of Saint Catherine's body, 26 September 1483.[1141]

It was thanks to the efforts of the architects Petros Koufopoulos and Marina Koufopoulou, who recorded the Hagia Koryphē visible ruins in the mid-1990s, that the Hellenic Archaeological Mission at South Sinai (a joint venture between the University of Athens and the Mount Sinai Foundation, Athens) began systematic excavations on the site. We were invited and supported by the archbishop and *synaxis* (council) of the Holy Monastery of the God-trodden Mount Sinai, Monastery of Saint Catherine.[1142] Three seasons of three weeks each aimed at clarifying the succession of buildings before and after the sixth-century basilica, finding material which could be related to written sources and establishing Hagia Koryphē as an archaeological landmark.

[1141] English translation in Fabri 1897: 602-3.

The original excavation team included Nikolaos Fyssas, Georgia Foukaneli and the author. We lived in a cell below cave A built in the 1970s out of red granite blocks from the basilica. The Fellaheen and Bedouin workers lived at Prophētēs Hēlias and climbed to the summit every morning. During the last season Dionysios Mourelatos was added to the team. Petros Koufopoulos and Marina Koufopoulou surveyed the architecture and supervised a partial reconstruction. Work was directed by Maria Panayotidi and Sophia Kalopissi-Verti, overseen by the Supreme Council of Antiquities, Egypt, and whole-heartedly supported by the fathers of the Monastery.

There were motivations beyond research for this archaeological project. The volume of tourist traffic in recent years had surpassed anything previously experienced. Every day before dawn, hundreds of tourists (sometimes as many as 300) made their way to the summit in the dark. Once on the top, they awaited for the sunrise camera-in-hand. Others ascended the previous evening and spent the night there, placing their sleeping bags strategically along the cliffs which faced east. They rented blankets and bought tea from the Bedouin who had erected cardboard and plastic shacks around the ruins of the basilica, the chapel of Hagia Triada and the mosque. However, tea and blankets were the only facilities and by the time the sun was up and the tourists gone the site was littered beyond capacity, a situation that got worse by the day. Before the late 1990s no provision had been made for such a volume of people and

[1142] Panayotidi & Kalopissi-Verti 2007: no pagination.

waste.[1143] The archaeological material which had survived for centuries was being removed or destroyed and the sanctity of the place was defiled.

The brotherhood of the Monastery was alarmed and invited specialists in the hope of achieving archaeological site status for the entire Horeb. Such a declaration on behalf of the Egyptian government would ensure controlled tourist traffic and increased protection. The results of the excavation, corroborating textual evidence for a Justinianic basilica and demonstrating the extent of surviving architecture, were instrumental in the eventual inclusion of the 'Saint Catherine Area' into the World Heritage Sites list of UNESCO in 2002. One of the criteria justifying the area's inscription to the list focused on Hagia Koryphē:[1144]

> '*Criterion (vi):* The St Catherine's area, centred on the holy mountain of Mount Sinaï (Jebel Musa, Mount Horeb), like the Old City of Jerusalem, is sacred to three world religions: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism.'

Future plans for the site include further reconstruction of the basilica with the use of original material and traditional techniques and a small degree of landscaping in order to channel the tourist traffic and moderate its impact on the natural environment and archaeological remains. To this end, stone-built stalls replacing the Bedouin shacks were erected a few metres below the summit, regular waste removal (by a Bedouin lady with a donkey) was arranged and texts were prepared for information signs. The publication of the final excavation report will hopefully prove an important contribution to the ultimate goal of Hagia Koryphē's rescue.

[1143] Hobbs 1995: 271-7.
[1144] Quoted from http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/954.

APPENDIX I. Texts

The original Greek, Latin, Arabic, French, Dutch, Italian, Czech and German texts quoted (in English) and numbered in bold Latin numerals in the main text of the thesis are given below.

	Original text	Reference
I	*Χωρήβ (Δευτ. 1, 2). ὄρος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν χώρᾳ Μαδιάμ. παράκειται τῷ ὄρει Σινᾶ ὑπὲρ τὴν Ἀραβίαν ἐπὶ τῆς ἐρήμου.*	Eusebius 1966: 172.
II	*+ Ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας τοῦ / ἀββᾶ Ἰωάν[ν]ου τοῦ / ἡγουμένου καὶ ----*	Ševčenko 1966: 263, figures 11A, 11B.
III	*Ὅθεν ἔστιν ἰδεῖν ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἐρήμῳ, λέγω δὴ τοῦ Σιναΐου ὄρους, ἐν πάσαις ταῖς καταπαύσεσι πάντας τοὺς λίθους τῶν αὐτόθι, τοὺς ἐκ τῶν ὀρέων ἀποκλωμένους, γεγραμμένους γράμμασι γλυπτοῖς ἑβραϊκοῖς, ὡς αὐτὸς ἐγὼ πεζεύσας τοὺς τόπους μαρτυρῶ.*	Cosmas 1970: 85 (V.53).
IV	*Montes uero toti per girum excauati sunt, taliter autem facte sunt cripte ille, ut, si suspendere uolueris uela, cubicula pulcherrima sint; unumquodque autem cubiculum est descriptum lidteris hebreis.*	Petrus 1965: 102 (Y14).
V	*Τὸ μὲν οὖν εἰρημένον ἔθνος [τῶν Βαρβάρων] τὴν ἀπὸ Ἀραβίας μέχρις Αἰγύπτου, θαλάσσῃ Ἐρυθρᾷ καὶ Ἰορδάνῃ ποταμῷ παρατεταμένην νέμεται ἔρημον· οὐ τέχνην, οὐκ ἐμπορίαν, οὐ γεωργίαν ἐπιτηδεῦόν ποτε, μόνην δὲ τὴν μάχαιραν ἔχον τῆς τροφῆς ὑπόθεσιν. Ἤ γὰρ*	Nilus 1860a: 611-14 (third narration).

	Original text	Reference
	ἀγρεύοντες τὰ τῆς ἐρήμου ζῶα διαζῶσι σαρκοφαγοῦντες· ἢ τοὺς παρατυγχάνοντας αἷς ἐφεδρεύουσιν ὁδοῖς λῃζόμενοι τὴν ἀναγκαίαν χρείαν ἑαυτοῖς ἀνύουσιν ὁπωσοῦν. Ὅταν δὲ ἀμφοτέρων ἀπορία ᾖ, καὶ σπανίσῃ τούτοις τὰ ἐπιτήδεια, τότε τοῖς ὑποζυγίοις (κάμηλοι δέ εἰσι δρομάδες) πρὸς ἐδωδὴν κατακέχρηνται, θηριώδη καὶ ὠμοβόρον ζῶντες βίον, κατὰ συγγενείας ἢ συσκηνίας μίαν σφαγιάζοντες, καὶ θέρμῃ πυρὸς ὀλίγῃ τῶν σαρκῶν χαυνοῦντες τὸ εὔτονον, ὡς μόνον εἴκειν μὴ πρὸς πολλὴν βίαν ἕλκουσι τοῖς ὀδοῦσιν ὡς εἰπεῖν, τρέφονται κυνικῶς. Θεὸν οὐκ εἰδότες οὐ νοητόν, οὐ χειρότευκτον· ἄστρῳ δὲ τῷ πρωϊνῷ προσκυνοῦντες καὶ θύοντες ἀνατέλλοντι τῶν λαφύρων τὰ δόκιμα, ὅταν ἐξ ἐφόδου λῃστρικῆς αὐτοῖς περιγένηταί τι πρὸς σφαγὴν ἐπιτήδειον.	
VI	*μείζονες ἡμῶν ὑπάρχουσιν·* […] *καὶ ἡνίκα πεινάσωμεν, τὴν τροφὴν ἑτοίμην εὑρίσκομεν· ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ εἰ δειψήσωμεν, ὕδωρ ἔχομεν.*	Paphnutius 1781: 123 (IV).
VII	*... οὐχ ὅτι τὸ θεῖον τόπῳ περιγεγράφθαι νομίζομεν* […] *ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ τοῖς θερμῶς ἐρῶσιν οὐ μόνον οἱ ἐρώμενοι τριπόθητοι, ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ τόποι ἐράσμιοι οἱ τὴν τούτων παρουσίαν καὶ ὁμιλίαν δεξάμενοι.*	Théodoret 1977: 356-57 (VI.8).
VIII	*Δέκα δὲ ὅλας ἡμέρας ὁδοιπορήσαντες, ὄρος φθάνουσι Πούπλιον μὲν ὑπὸ τῶν προσοικούντων καλούμενον, ἐγγὺς δέ που τοῦ Σινᾶ κείμενον ὄρους. Ἔνθα δυοκαίδεκα μοναχοῖς ἐντυχόντες, ἀσκητικὴν πολιτείαν μετερχομένοις, τὰ τοῦ σκοποῦ τε αὐτοῖς διηγόρευον, καὶ προσληφθῆναι*	Symeon 1864a: 101-02 (IA΄).

	Original text	Reference
	καὶ τῷ καταλόγῳ τούτων ἐγγραφῆναι ἠξίουν· [...]	
IX	*Σιλβανὸς δέ, ὃν διὰ τὴν ἄγαν ἀρετὴν ὑπὸ ἀγγέλων ὑπηρετούμενον θεαθῆναι λόγος, Παλαιστῖνος ὢν ἔτι οἶμαι κατὰ τὴν Αἴγυπτον ἐφιλοσόφει τότε· ὕστερον δὲ ἐν τῷ Σιναίῳ ὄρει ὀλίγον διατρίψας,* [...]	Sozomenus 1960: 288-89 (VI.32).
X	*Narraverunt de abbate Nathyra, qui fuit discipulus abbatis Silvani, quia cum sederet in cella sua in monte Sina, mediocriter gubernavit vitam suam de his quæ erant necessaria corpori.*	*De Vitis Patrum* 1849: 918 (Libellus decimus, 36).
XI	*Διηγήσαντο περὶ τοῦ ἀββᾶ Νετρᾶ μαθητοῦ τοῦ ἀββᾶ Σιλουανοῦ, ὅτι ὅτε ἐκάθητο εἰς τὸ κελλίον αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ ὄρει τῷ Σινᾷ, συμμέτρως ἐδιοίκει ἑαυτὸν πρὸς τὴν χρείαν τοῦ σώματος.*	*Apophthegmata* 1858: 311-12.
XII	*Τούτοις [τοῖς ἁγίοις] ὁ διάβολος φθονήσας, διήγειρε τὸ ἄγριον ἔθνος τῶν Βλεμμύων κατ' αὐτῶν· οὗτοι δέ εἰσιν οἱ ἀπὸ Ἀραβίας ἕως Αἰγύπτου κατοικοῦντες τὴν Ἐρυθρὰν θάλασσαν. Οἳ καὶ ἐλπίζοντες εὑρεῖν πλοῦτον ἦλθον σκυλεῦσαι τοὺς μοναχούς· ὡς δὲ οὐδὲν εὗρον εἰ μὴ ψιάθια μόνα καὶ τοὺς ἁγίους τρίχινα φοροῦντας, ἐμάνησαν καὶ κατέσφαξαν αὐτοὺς μηδὲν ἀδικοῦντας. Χρόνοις δὲ πολλοῖς πρότερον, ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τοῦ Διοκλητιανοῦ, ἀνῃρέθησαν παρὰ τῶν Ἀγαρηνῶν ὅσοι πατέρες ἐν τῷ Σινᾷ καὶ τῇ Ῥαϊθοῦ, κατὰ τὴν εἰκοστὴν δευτέραν τοῦ δεκεμβρίου μηνός·...*	*Synaxarium* 1902: 391_{1-13} (Mensis Ianuarius 14).
XIII	*Allah créa la terre carrée et couverte de pierres. Ce premier point achevé, il descendit avec les anges, se plaça, comme tu le sais, sur la cime du*	Dumas 1839a: 62.

	Original text	Reference
	Sinaï, qui est le centre du monde, traça un grand cercle dont la circonférence touchait aux quatre côtés du carré. Alors il ordonna à ces anges de jeter toutes les pierres dans les angles qui correspondaient aux quatre points cardinaux. Les anges obéirent, et quand le cercle fut déblayé, il le donna aux Arabes, qui sont ses enfants bien-aimés, puis il appela les quatre angles la France, l'Italie, l'Angleterre et la Russie.	
XIV	*Ibi [Caesarea Palestina] est balneus Cornelii centurionis, qui multas elymosynas faciebat. Inde est tertio miliario mons Syna, ubi fons est, in quem mulier est lauerit, grauida fit.*	*Itinerarium* 1965: 13 (585, 7-9 and 586, 1-2).
XV	*Iuxta montem Syna in Fara ciuitate, ibi sanctus Moyses cum Amalech pugnauit. De Hierusalem in Elusath mansiones III, de Elusath in Aila mansiones VII, quam ille Alexander Magnus Macedo fabricauit. De Aila usque in monte Syna mansiones VIII, si compendiaria uolueris ambulare per heremum, sin autem per Aegyptum, mansiones XXV.*	Theodosius 1965: 123 (27).
XVI	*Mons Syna hic legem acceperunt in monte Syna.*	Bosio 1983: 76-7.
XVII	*Et quoniam nobis ita erat iter, ut prius montem Dei ascenderemus, quia hac parte unde ueniebamus melior ascensus erat, et illinc denuo ad illud caput uallis descenderemus, id est ubi rubus erat, quia melior descensus montis Dei erat inde.*	Égérie 1982: 120-49 (2.3).
XVIII	*Qui montes cum infinito labore ascenduntur, quoniam non eos subis lente et lente per girum, ut dicimus, in coclea, sed totum ad directum subis ac si*	Égérie 1982: 120-49 (3.1-2).

	Original text	Reference
	per parietem et ad directum descendi necesse est singulos ipsos montes, donec peruenias ad radicem propriam illius mediani, qui est specialis Syna. Hac sic ergo iuebente Christo Deo nostro, adiuta orationibus sanctorum, qui comitabantur, et sic cum grandi labore, quia pedibus me ascendere necesse erat, quia prorsus nec in sella ascendi poterat, tamen ipse labor non sentiebatur – ex ea parte autem non sentiebatur labor, quia desiderium, quod habebam, iubente Deo uidebam compleri-.	
XIX	*... non grandis, quoniam et ipse locus, id est summitas montis, non satis grandis est; quae tamen aecclesia habet de se gratiam grandem.*	Égérie 1982: 120-49 (3.3).
XX	*Verum autem in ipsa summitate montis illius mediani nullus commanet; nichil enim est ibi aliud nisi sola ecclesia et spelunca, ubi fuit sanctus Moyses.*	Égérie 1982: 120-49 (3.5).
XXI	*Nam [sancti] ostenderunt nobis speluncam illam, ubi fuit sanctus Moyses, cum iterato ascendisset in montem Dei, ut acciperet denuo tabulas, posteaquam priores illas fregerat peccante populo, et cetera loca,* [...]	Égérie 1982: 120-49 (3.7).
XXII	*Egyptum autem et Palestinam et mare Rubrum et mare illut Parthenicum, quod mittit Alexandriam, nec non et fines Saracenorum infinitos ita subter nos inde uidebamus, ut credi uix possit; ...*	Égérie 1982: 120-49 (3.8).
XXIII	*Ταύτην ἀποδιδράσκων - δῆλος γὰρ ἅπασι γεγονὼς εἶλκε πρὸς αὐτὸν διὰ τῆς φήμης τοὺς τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐραστάς -, τὸ τέλος ἐπὶ τὸ Σίναιον ὄρος μετ' ὀλίγων τῶν συνηθεστέρων ἐξώρμησεν, οὐ πόλεως ἐπιβαίνων, οὐ κώμης,*	Théodoret 1977: 222-5 (II.13).

	Original text	Reference
	ἀλλὰ τὴν ἄβατον ἔρημον βατὴν ἐργαζόμενος. Ἔφερον δὲ ἐπὶ τῶν ὤμων καὶ τὴν ἀναγκαίαν τροφὴν - τὸν ἄρτον φημὶ καὶ τοὺς ἅλας - καὶ κώθωνα ἐκ ξύλου πεποιημένον καὶ σπογγιὰν σμηρίνθῳ προσδεδεμένην ὅπως, εἴ ποτε βαθύτερον εὕροιεν ὕδωρ, ἀνιμήσαιντο μὲν τῇ σπογγιᾷ, ἀποθλίψαντες δὲ εἰς τὸν κώθωνα ἀποπίοιεν. Τοιγάρτοι πολλῶν ἡμερῶν ὁδὸν ἐξανύσαντες, καταλαμβάνουσι τὸ ποθούμενον ὄρος καί, τὸν οἰκεῖον προσκυνήσαντες δεσπότην, πολὺν ἐκεῖ διετέλεσαν χρόνον, τοῦ χωρίου τὴν ἐρημίαν καὶ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ἡσυχίαν τρυφὴν μεγίστην ἡγούμενοι. Ἐν ἐκείνῃ δὲ τῇ πέτρᾳ, ὑφ' ᾗ κρυπτόμενος Μωϋσῆς τῶν προφητῶν ὁ κορυφαῖος ἠξιώθη τὸν θεὸν ἰδεῖν, ὡς δυνατὸν ἦν ἰδεῖν, ἐκκλησίαν δειμάμενος καὶ θεῖον ἁγιάσας θυσιαστήριον ὃ καὶ εἰς δεῦρο διέμεινεν, εἰς τὴν οἰκείαν ἐπανῆκε παλαίστραν.	
XXIV	*Ἐπειδὴ τοίνυν τὸ ποθούμενον κατέλαβον ὄρος, φασὶν ἐκεῖνον τὸν θαυμάσιον γέροντα ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ χωρίῳ ἐν ᾧ τὸν θεὸν Μωϋσῆς ἰδεῖν ἠξιώθη, εἶδε δὲ ὡς δυνατὸν ἦν φύσει θνητῇ, κλῖναι τὰ γόνατα καὶ μὴ πρότερον ἀναστῆναι ἕως θείας ἐπήκουσε φωνῆς, τὴν δεσποτικὴν αὐτῷ μηνυούσης εὐμένειαν. Ἐπειδὴ δὲ καὶ ἅπαντα τῆς ἑβδομάδος τὸν κύκλον οὕτω συγκεκυφὼς διετέλεσε, τροφῆς οὐδὲ βραχείας μεταλαχὼν, ἐκέλευσεν ἡ γενόμενη φωνὴ καὶ τὰ προτεθέντα αὐτῷ λαβεῖν καὶ προθύμως καταφαγεῖν.*	Théodoret 1977: 354-7 (VI.12).
XXV	*Ἐν δὲ τῇ πάλαι μὲν Ἀραβίᾳ, νῦν δὲ Παλαιστίνῃ τρίτῃ καλουμένῃ, χώρα μὲν ἔρημος ἐπὶ μακρὸν κατατείνει, καρπῶν τε καὶ ὑδάτων καὶ πάντων*	Procopius 1971: 354-56 (V.viii).

	Original text	Reference
	ἀγαθῶν ἄφορος. καὶ ὄρος ἀπότομόν τε καὶ δεινῶς ἄγριον ἀποκρέμαται ἄγχιστά πη τῆς Ἐρυθρᾶς καλουμένης θαλάσσης, Σινὰ ὄνομα. [...] ἐν τούτῳ δὲ τῷ Σινᾷ ὄρει μοναχοὶ ᾤκηνται, οἷς ἐστιν ὁ βίος ἠκριβωμένη τις μελέτη θανάτου, ἐρημίας τῆς σφίσι φιλτάτης ἀδεέστερον ἀπολαύουσι.. [...)] ἀνθρώπῳ γὰρ ἐν τῇ ἀκρωρείᾳ διανυκτερεύειν ἀμήχανά ἐστιν, ἐπεὶ κτύποι τε διηνεκὲς καὶ ἕτερα ἄττα θειότερα νύκτωρ ἀκούονται, δύναμίν τε καὶ γνώμην τὴν ἀνθρωπείαν ἐκπλήσσοντα ἐνταῦθά ποτε τὸν Μωσέα φασὶ πρὸς τοῦ θεοῦ τοὺς νόμους παραλαβόντα ἐξενεγκεῖν.	
XXVI	*ἐὰν μὲν καθαρὰ ἀπαλλάττηται, μηδὲν τοῦ σώματος συνεφέλκουσα, ἅτε οὐδὲν κοινωνοῦσα αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ βίῳ ἑκοῦσα εἶναι, ἀλλὰ φεύγουσα αὐτὸ καὶ συνηθροισμένη αὐτὴ εἰς ἑαυτήν, ἅτε μελετῶσα ἀεὶ τοῦτο – τὸ δὲ οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἢ ὀρθῶς φιλοσοφοῦσα καὶ τῷ ὄντι τεθνάναι μελετῶσα ῥᾳδίως· ἢ οὐ τοῦτ' ἂν εἴη μελέτη θανάτου;*	Platon 1958: no pagination, 80e-81a.
XXVII	*Inde ascendimus millia continuo tria in summum cacumen montis, in quo est oratorium modicum plus minus pedes sex in latitudine et in longitudine. In quo nullus presumit manere, sed orto iam die ascendent monachi et faciunt opus dei. In quo loco omnes pro deuotione barbas et capillos suos tondent et iactant, ubi etiam et ego tetigi barbas.* *Mons Sina petrosus, raro terram habet. In quo per circuitum cellulae multae seruorum dei et in Choreb similiter et dicunt esse Choreb terram*	Antoninus 1965a: 148-149 (37-38).

	Original text	Reference
	mundam. Et in ipso monte in parte montis habent idolum suum positum Sarraceni marmoreum, candidum tem quam nix. In quo etiam permanet sacerdos ipsorum indutus dalmatica et pallio lineum. Quando etiam uenit tempus festiuitatis ipsorum recurrente luna, antequam egrediatur luna, ad diem festum ipsorum incipit colorem mutare marmor illa; mox luna introierit, quando coeperint adorare, fit nigra marmor illa tamquam pice. Completo tempore festiuitatis reuertitur in pristinum colorem, unde omnino mirati sumus.	
XXVIII	*... ἀδελφός τις διακονητὴς τοῦ παραμοναρίου ὑπάρχων περιφρονήσας ἀπεκρύβη ἔσω ἐν τῷ ναῷ, λέγων μηδὲν ἀδικεῖσθαι τὸν κοιμώμενον αὐτόθι. Ὁ γοῦν παραμονάριος νομίσας ὅτι προέλαβεν αὐτὸν ὁ μαθητὴς αὐτοῦ καὶ κατῆλθεν, θυμιάσας τὸν ἅγιον τόπον καὶ κλεῖσας τὰς θύρας ἀνεχώρησεν. Τῇ οὖν νυκτὶ ἀνέστη ὁ μαθητὴς ὁ ἀποκρυβεὶς ἐν τῷ ναῷ ὅπως προσμύξει τὰς κανδήλας, καὶ ἡνίκα ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν πρώτην κανδήλαν, αὐτὸς ὁ σπινθὴρ ὃν ἐτίναξεν, κατὰ θείαν κέλευσιν ἔβλασεν τὸ πλευρὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐξηράνθη ἀπὸ τῆς ὥρας ἐκείνης ὅλον τὸ πλάγιον αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἡ μία χεὶρ, καὶ ὁ εἷς πούς, καὶ ἔμεινεν ἡμίξηρος ἕως οὗ ἐτελεύτησεν.*	Anastase 1902a: 61 (*Διήγησις β'*).
XXIX	*... ἐν τῇ ἑσπέρᾳ ἐχιόνισεν ἐξαίφνης σφοδρῶς, ὥστε καλυφθῆναι τὸ ὄρος τῆς ἁγίας κορυφῆς, ἐπὶ τρεῖς ἢ τέσσαρας πήχεις ἐκ τοῦ χίονος. Καὶ ἀπεκλείσθη ἄνω μὴ δυνηθεὶς κατελθεῖν. Τοῖς χρόνοις οὖν ἐκείνοις οὐδεὶς ἐτόλμα τὸ παράπαν*	Anastase 1902a: 82-3 (*Διήγησις μθ'*).

	Original text	Reference
	κοιμηθῆναι ἐν τῇ ἁγίᾳ κορυφῇ. Ἐν ὅσῳ οὖν ἐποίει τὸν κανόνα ὁ παραμονάριος, περὶ τὸ αὖγος ἀπενύσταξεν, καὶ μετενεχθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, εὑρέθη ἐν Ῥώμῃ εἰς τὸν ἅγιον Πέτρον. [...] *Κατ' οἰκονομίαν δὲ θεοῦ εὑρέθη ἔχων ἐν τῇ ζώνῃ αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ κλειδία τῶν θυρῶν ἐπιγράφοντα ἁγίας κορυφῆς τοῦ Σινᾶ.*	
XXX	*...διακονητὴς ἐν τῇ ἁγία κορυφῇ, Ἐλισσαῖος ὀνόματι, Ἀρμένιος τῷ γένει, οὐχ ἅπαξ οὐδὲ δίς, ἀλλὰ σχεδὸν εἰπεῖν κατανύκτα, ὡς καθαρὸς καὶ ἄξιος, ἔλεγε θεωρεῖν τὸ πῦρ ἐπικαθήμενον ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ ναῷ τῆς θείας νομοθεσίας.*	Anastase 1902a: 81 (*Διήγησις μζ'*).
XXXI	*...ἡνίκα ἔφθασαν τὴν ἐξωτέραν ἁγίαν πέτραν ἔνθα τὸν νόμον ἐδέξατο ὁ Μωϋσῆς, γέγονε θεοῦ ὀπτασία καὶ θαυματουργία φοβερὰ ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ τόπῳ, καὶ τῷ λαῷ ἐκείνῳ καθάπερ πάλαι ἐπὶ τῆς νομοθεσίας, ὅλη γὰρ ἡ ἁγία κορυφὴ καὶ ὁ λαὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐν μέσῳ πυρὸς ὑπάρχων ἐφαίνετο.* [...] *Καταπλαγέντος οὖν τοῦ ὄχλου ἐκείνου, καὶ βοῶντος τὸ Κύριε ἐλέησον ὡς ἐπὶ ὥραν μίαν, πάλιν ὑπεχώρισε τὸ πῦρ, καὶ οὐκ ἐβλάβη θρὶξ μία ἐξ αὐτῶν οὔτε ἱμάτιον, ἀλλ' ἢ μόναι αἱ ῥάβδοι αὐτῶν δίκην κηρῶν ἥπτον ἐν τῇ ὀπτασίᾳ, εἶτα ἀποσβεσθεῖσαι.*	Anastase 1902a: 81-2 (*Διήγησις μη'*).
XXXII	*... jugum Sina montis ascendi, cujus summum cacumen cœlo pene contiguum nequaquam adiri potest.*	Severus 1845: 194.
XXXIII	*... ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ κελλίῳ ἐν τῇ ἁγίᾳ κορυφῇ...*	Joannis 1860a: 812-14.
XXXIV	*τούτοις δὴ τοῖς μοναχοῖς Ἰουστινιανὸς βασιλεὺς (ἐπεὶ οὐκ εἶχον οὐδὲν ὅτου ἐφεῖντο, ἀλλὰ*	Procopius 1971: 354-6 (V.viii)

	Original text	Reference
	κρείσσους τῶν ἀνθρωπείων ἁπάντων εἰσίν, οὐδέ τι κεκτῆσθαι οὐδὲ θεραπεύειν τὰ σώματα, οὐ μέντοι οὐδὲ ἄλλου ὁτουοῦν ὀνίνασθαι ἐν σπουδῇ ἔχουσιν) ἐκκλησίαν ᾠκοδομήσατο, ἥνπερ τῇ θεοτόκῳ ἀνέθηκεν, ὅπως δὴ αὐτοῖς ἐνταῦθα ἐξῇ εὐχομένοις τε καὶ ἱερωμένοις διαβιῶναι. ταύτην δὲ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν οὐ κατὰ τοῦ ὄρους ἐδείματο τὴν ὑπερβολήν, ἀλλὰ παρὰ πολὺ ἔνερθεν. [...] *ἐς δὲ τοῦ ὄρους τὸν πρόποδα καὶ φρούριον ἐχυρώτατον ὁ βασιλεὺς οὗτος ᾠκοδομήσατο, φυλακτήριόν τε στρατιωτῶν ἀξιολογώτατον κατεστήσατο, ὡς μὴ ἐνθένδε Σαρακηνοὶ βάρβαροι ἔχοιεν ἅτε τῆς χώρας ἐρήμου οὔσης, ἧπέρ μοι εἴρηται, ἐσβάλλειν ὡς λαθραιότατα ἐς τὰ ἐπὶ Παλαιστίνης χωρία.*	
XXXV	*Ἐν μιᾷ ἑορτῆς ἐπιτελουμένης τῆς ἁγίας Πεντηκοστῆς γινομένης ἀναφορᾶς ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ ἁγίᾳ κορυφῇ καὶ ἐκφωνήσαντος τοῦ ἱερέως τὸν ἐπινίκιον ὕμνον τῆς μεγαλοπρεποῦς δόξης· ἀπεκρίθησαν τὰ ὄρη πάντα φοβερᾷ τινι βοῇ λέγοντα ἐκ τρίτου Ἅγιος, Ἅγιος, Ἅγιος, καὶ ἔμεινεν ὁ ἦχος διασυρεὶς καὶ ἡ βοή, ὡς ἐπὶ ἡμιώριον.*	Anastase 1902a: 61-2 (*Διήγησις γ'*).
XXXVI	*Οὗτος ὁ ἀοίδιμος βασιλεὺς τὸ ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ ὄρει Σινᾷ φρούριον μεγαλοπρεπὲς ᾠκοδόμησεν καὶ τοὺς ἐν αὐτῷ θείους ναοὺς ἐντίμως οἰκοδομήσας ἐδόξασε· καὶ τὴν πανθαύμαστον ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἁγίου ὄρους τῆς ἁγίας κορυφῆς αὐτὸς ἐδείματο· καὶ χρημάτων εἰσόδους δαψιλῶς τοῖς ἐν τῷ Σινᾷ μοναστηρίοις καὶ πάσῃ τῇ Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ Παλαιστίνῃ διακειμένοις σεμνείοις καὶ παρθενῶσιν ἀφθόνως ἐχορήγησε.*	*Synaxarium* 1902: $229_{31\text{-}6}$ (Mensis November16).

	Original text	Reference
XXXVII	+ *Αὕτη ἡ πύλη κυρίου, / δίκαιοι εἰσελεύσοντ/αι ἐν αὐτῇ* + *Ἰουστινια/νοῦ αὐτοκράτορος / [το]ῦ φιλοκτίστου* or *φιλοχρίστου*	Ševčenko 1966: 262, figure 1.
XXXVIII	+ *Κ(ύρι)ε ὁ θ(εὸ)ς ὁ ὀφθεὶς ἐν τῷ τόπῳ {του} τούτῳ, σῶσον καὶ ἐλέησον τὸν δοῦ\λον / σου Στέφανον Μαρ/τυρίου, δι(ά)κο(νον) καὶ τέκτονα Ἀϊλήσιον, κ(αὶ) ἀνάπαυσον τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν τέκνων αὐτοῦ Γεοργ(ίου) καὶ Νόννας.*	Ševčenko 1966: 262.
XXXIX	+ *Ὑπὲρ μνήμης κ(αὶ) ἀναπαύσεως τῆς γεναμένης ἡμῶν βασιλίδος Θεοδώρας* +	Ševčenko 1966: 262.
XL	+ *Ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας τοῦ εὐσεβ(εστάτου) ἡμῶν βασιλέως Ἰουστινιανοῦ* +	Ševčenko 1966: 262.
XLI	+ *Ἐν ὀνόματι π(ατ)ρ(ὸ)ς κ(αὶ) ὑ(ιο)ῦ κ(αὶ) ἁγίου πν(εύματο)ς· γέγονεν τὸ πᾶν ἔργον τοῦτο ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας τῶν καρποφορησάντ(ων), ἐπὶ Λογ-γίνου τοῦ ὁσιωτ(άτου) πρεσβ(υτέρου) κ(αὶ) ἡγουμένου* + / + *Σπου δῆ Θεο δώρου πρεσβ(υτέ-ρου) κ(αὶ) δευτ(εραρίου), ἰνδ(ικτιῶνος) δῖ* +	Ševčenko 1966: 263, figures 7A, 7B, 7C.
XLII	*Ὠφ(θεὶ)ς θ(εὸ)ς ἐν τ<ο>ῦ / τώπ<ου τ>ούτο / μν<ή>σθετι / τὸν Ὑσυχί<ο>υ.*	Ševčenko 1966: 263, figures 12A and 12B.
XLIII	*Circuivimus et lustravimus totum montis verticem et vidimus grandes ruinas antiquorum murorum per gyrum, et creditur, ibide fuisse monasterium, quod quidem totum destructum est praeter ecclesiam, juxta quam semper manent duo fratres de monasterio S. Catharinae.*	Fabri 1843: 459.
XLIV	وَشَجَرَةً تَخْرُجُ مِن طُورِ سَيْنَاءَ تَنۢبُتُ بِٱلدُّهْنِ وَصِبْغٍ لِّلْءَاكِلِينَ	Qur'ān XXIII:20.
XLV	[...] *πρὶν ἢ μολύνθη ἢ καταῤῥυπωθῇ ὑπὸ τοῦ*	Anastase 1902a: 61.

	Original text	Reference
	παρόντος ἔθνους [...]	
XLVI	*ἐν ὀνόμ(ατι) τοῦ Θεοῦ παν(τοκράτορος)· Αβου Ρασεδ / σύμβου(λος) / Γεωργίῳ Νεσάνων / εὐχαριστῶ τῷ Θεῷ. ἔπιτα ἐρχομένου / πρὸς σὲ Αβου Αλμουγερ μανλε τοῦ Ερια/βε(ν) Αβι Σουφιαν, θέλησον παρασχεῖν / αὐ]τῷ ἄνθρωπον ἀπὸ Νεσάνων ὀφείλοντα / ὀδιγῖσαι αὐτὸν τὴν στρᾶταν τοῦ ἁγίου / ὄρους καὶ παρέχει αὐτὸν τὸ μισθάριν / αὐτοῦ. / ἐγρ(άφη) μ(ηνὶ) Μαρτ(ίῳ) ἰ(ν)δ(ικτιῶνος) ιβ χειρὶ Θεοδώρου*	Kraemer 1958: 206.
XLVII	*ἐν [ὀνό]μ(ατι) τοῦ Θ[εοῦ πα(ντοκράτορος)· Αβο]ῦ Ρασεδ [σύμβου(λος) / τοῖς ἀπ[ὸ Νε]σά[ν]ων / εὐχαριστῶ τῷ Θεῷ. ἔπειτα ἐρχομένης / πρὸς ὑμᾶς τῆς γυναικὸς μου / Οβαια παράσχετε αὐτὴν ἔν[α] / ἄνθρωπων ὀφείλοντα δίξεστη / τὴν στρᾶταν τουρσινα καὶ / παρέχει αὐτῷ τὸ μισθάριν αὐτοῦ· / ἐγρ(άφη) μ(ηνὶ) Δεκε(μβρίῳ) ε ἰνδι(κτίωνος) ιβ +*	Kraemer 1958: 207.
XLVIII	*Θλιβέντες οὖν οἱ Ἄραβες ἀπῆλθον πρὸς τοὺς ὁμοφύλους, καὶ αὐτοὶ ὡδήγησαν αὐτοὺς ἐπὶ τὴν χώραν Γάζης στομίου οὔσης τῆς ἐρήμου κατὰ τὸ Σιναῖον ὄρος πλουσίας σφόδρα.*	Theophanis 1883: 2.210
XLIX	*Ὧ θ(ε)ὼ(ς) τοῦ ἁγήου Μοϋ[σῆ], / μνήστηθη Κοσμᾶ καὶ / τοῦν τέκνουν αὐτοῦ / Τημοκράτους Σεργήου Κονσταντίας. / [Αμ']ήν.*	Ševčenko 1966: 264, figure 13.
L	*[+ Ὧ θ(εὸ)ς] τοῦ ἁγίου Μοϋσῆ / [μνήστηθ]η τοῦ δούλου σου / [---]μίου διακόνου / [καὶ π]αραμοναρίου / τοῦ γράψαντος +*	Ševčenko 1966: 264, figures 13, 14.
LI	*Ὅτε κατὰ τὴν δικαίαν κρίσην τοῦ θεοῦ τὸ τῶν*	Anastase 1902a: 87.

	Original text	Reference
	Σαρακηνῶν ἔθνος ἐξῆλθεν ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ ὄρει τοῦ Σινᾶ, τοῦ παραλαβεῖν τὸν τόπον, καὶ ποιῆσαι ἀποστῆναι τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ πίστεως τοὺς Σαρακηνοὺς τοὺς προϋπάρχοντας ἐνταῦθα Χριστιανοὺς πρότερον ὑπάρχοντας, ἀκούσαντες οὖν τοῦτο οἱ πλησίον τοῦ κάστρου Φαρὰν καὶ τῆς ἁγίας βάτου, τὴν κατοίκησιν καὶ τὰς σκηνὰς ἔχοντας, ἀνῆλθον συμφάμιλοι ὥσπερ εἰς ὀχυρὸν τόπον ἄνω εἰς τὴν ἁγίαν κορυφήν, ἐφ' ᾧ πολεμῆσαι ὡς ἐξ ὕψους τοὺς Σαρακηνοὺς τοὺς ἐρχομένους, ὅπερ καὶ πεποίηκαν ὅμως ἀδυνατήσαντες ἐπὶ πολὺ ἀντιπαρατάξασθαι τῷ πλήθει τῶν παραγενομένων, δέδωκαν ἑαυτοῖς εἰς τὸ προσρυῆναι αὐτοῖς καὶ πιστεῦσαι σὺν αὐτοῖς.	
LII	*...il y avoit autrefois sur cette montagne une belle Eglise qui a esté démolie par un tremblement de terre: l'on dit que Dieu le permit, parceque les Turcs la vouloient prendre pour faire une Mosquée, & qu'ayant voulu tirer quelques pierres des ruines, il en sortit de grandes flammes de dessous terre* [...]	Monconys 1973: 101.
LIII	*... eam Dominus angelicis manibus deferri ac tumulari disposuit, ubi quondam tabulis inscriptam lapideis legem Moysi famulo suo dedit.*	*Translatio* 1903: 427.
LIV	*E quivi hanno il capo e due ossa; chè veramente la reliquia della testa di santa Caterina è molto divota a vedere, perrochè tu vedi tutto'l capo dal collo in su, e scoperto senza nium ornamento d'argento: così si vede chiaramente colla cotenna fresca, come s'ella fosse di piccolo tempo, e continuamente per grazia di Dio la detta testa gitta manna.*	Sigoli 1843: 97.

	Original text	Reference
LV	*Ibi in monte Sina Monachos DEO seruientes audiens commorari, ad eos per deuexa montis causa orationis & allocutionis, accelerare decreuit: Sed rogatus eorum nunciis ad se præmissis, minime ascendit, ne seilicet Monachi suspecti propter Catholicum Regem, à Gentilibus de montis habitatione pellerentur. Abhinc enim vsque ad Babyloniam ciuitatem intra quatuor dies veniri posse referebatur.*	Albertus 1611: 376.
LVI	*[...] ἀλλὰ ἔστειλε καὶ εἰς τὴν ἔρημον ἕνα ἐρημήτην Ἄραβα, Ἴμπνι Γαγιάτην λεγόμενον, μετὰ δυνάμεως πολλῆς, διὰ νὰ κατεδαφίσῃ καὶ τὸ Μοναστήριον τοῦ Σινᾶ, καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ μονήδρια ἐκείνου τοῦ Ὄρους, ὅσα ἔκτισαν ἕως τότε ἰδιαιτέρως οἱ Χριστιανοί. Εὑρίσκετο δὲ κατ'ἐκεῖνον τὸν καιρὸν εἰς τὸ Μοναστήριον καί τις Αἰγύπτιος μοναχὸς Σολομὼν ὀνομαζόμενος, υἱὸς εὐγενῶν προγόνων καὶ φρονιμώτατος ἄνθρωπος, ὁ ὁποῖος ἐν ὅσῳ ἤλπιζεν, ὅτι δὲν θέλει φθάσει ἡ ἐρήμωσις τοῦ Μέλεκ Δάχαρ καὶ εἰς αὐτὴν τὴν βαθυτάτην ἔρημον, ἐπαρηγόρει τοὺς Σιναΐτας, ὑποπτευομένους ὅλα τὰ δεινά. Ἀφ' οὗ ἔμαθεν ὅμως, ὅτι ὁ Γαγιάτης ἐπίτηδες ἔρχεται ἀπεσταλμένος κατ'αὐτῶν, καὶ ὅτι κατέστρεψε τὰ Μοναστήρια τοῦ Σουβεϊσίου καὶ ἄλλα πολλά, τότε τὸν κατέλαβε φόβος μέγας· πλὴν δὲν ἔφθασεν εἰς ἀπελπισίαν καὶ ἀμηχανίαν, ἀλλ'ἐστοχάσθη ὅτι δύναται νὰ νικήσῃ τὴν βαρβαρότητα τοῦ Γαγιάτου διὰ μέσου δώρων. ὅθεν συνεσκέφθη μὲ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς, καὶ συμφωνήσας περὶ τοῦ πρακτέου,*	*Perigraphē* 1978: 123-4, originally printed in 1817.

	Original text	Reference
	παρέλαβε δύω τρεῖς γέροντας, καὶ ἦλθε μακρὰν μιᾶς ἡμέρας διάστημα εἰς προϋπάντησίν του, ἐπιφέρων πρόχειρα δῶρα βρωμάτων, καὶ ἄλλων τοιούτων. Ὁ δὲ Βάρβαρος κατὰ θείαν νεῦσιν τὸν ἀπεδέχθη μὲ ἱλαρὸν πρόσωπον, καὶ τὸν ἠρώτησε τὶ ζητεῖ· ὁ δὲ Σολομὼν ἀπεκρίθη, ὅτι ἦλθεν ἐπίτηδες νὰ τὸν προσκυνήσῃ, καὶ νὰ παρακαλέσῃ τὴν εὐσπλαγχνία του ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν του, καὶ τοῦ Μοναστηρίου του· μετεχειρίσθη δὲ εἰς τὴν ὁμιλίαν του ὅσους εὗρε λόγους πιθανοὺς, καὶ μαλακτικοὺς τῆς ἀγριότητός του, ἀνατρέπων τὴν ἰδέαν τοῦ μοναστηριακοῦ πλούτου, καὶ ὑποσχόμενος εἰς αὐτὸν ὡς ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Θεοῦ μεγαλητέρας εὐεργεσίας εἰς ἀνταμοιβὴν τῆς εὐσπλαγχνίας του, καὶ τέλος πάντων κατέπεισε τὸν Γαγιάτην νὰ μείνῃ εἰς τὸν τόπον ὅπου τὸν ἐπρόφθασεν, αὐτὸς δὲ νὰ φέρῃ ἐκεῖ ὅλα τὰ χρυσᾶ καὶ ἀργυρᾶ σκεύη τοῦ Μοναστηρίου, τὰ ὁποῖα παραλαβὼν ὁ βάρβαρος, μετέβαλε τὴν γνώμην τῆς καταστροφῆς τῶν Σιναϊτῶν, καὶ αἰνεχώρησε.	
LVII	*Ad monasterium quoque montis Sinai decem milia Sarracenorum armatorum venientes destruendum, longe quatuor millibus conspiciunt totum montem ardere et flammas usque in celum ferri, et cuncta ibi posita cum hominibus manere illesa. Quod cum renunciassent regi Babilonio, penitencia ductus tam ipse quam populus Sarracenus valde doluerunt de his, quae contra Christianos egissent, et data praeceptione, jussit raedificari basilicam sepulchri gloriosi.*	Adémar 1897: 169-70 (III: 47).

	Original text	Reference
LVIII	بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له له الملك وله الحمد يحي و يميت بيده الحسن و هو على كل شيء قدير نصر من الله وفتح قريب لعبد الله ووليه ابي على المنصور الامام الامرباحكام الله امير المومنين صلوات الله عليه و على ابايه الطاهرين و ابنايه المنتظرين امر بانشا هذا المنبر السيد الاجل الافضل أمير الجيوش سيف الاسلام ناصر الامام كافل قضاة المسلمين و هادى دعاة المؤمنين أبو القاسم شاا شاه عضد الله به الدين و امتع بطول بقايه امير المومنين وأدام قدرته و أعلا كلمته و ذلك في شهر ربيع الأول سنة خمس ماميه اثوبا لله	Moritz 1918: 50.
LIX	*Ipse eciam Magnus Soldanus, rex Babilonie, tunc temporis extiterat ibi, et reuerens locum illum humiliter et nudis pedibus introiuit.*	Thietmarus 1857: 42.
LX	*Die grote soldaen die coninc van Babilonien was doe ter tijt oec selve daer ende hi eerde oetmoedeliken die stede ende ghinc daer in mit bloten voeten.*	Thietmar 1936: 40.
LXI	بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم مما امر بعمل هذا الشمع والكراسي المباركة و الجامع المبارك الذي بالدير الاعلا والثلاث مساجد فوف مناجاة موسى عليه السلام والجامع الذي فوق جبل دير فاران والمسجد الذي تحت فاران الجديدة والمنارة التي بحضر الساحل الامير الموفق المنتخب منير الدولة وفارسها ابي منصور انوشتكين الامري	Moritz 1918: 52-3.

	Original text	Reference
LXII	*La chiesa si è molto bella ed è piccola, posta in cima del monte. La detta chiesa sta volta allo levante, partita con uno muro piccolo; e sopra lo muro si è una tavola dipinta, come Moisè divise lo mare Rosso colla verga in mano, e come passò lo populo d'Israel, e come l'esercito di Faraone annegò nel mare Rosso;* [...] *Nella detta chiesa si è figurato per ordine tutta questa storia di Moisè.*	Poggibonsi 1945: 131.
LXIII	*Sopra la detta porta si è lavorato, d'opera musaica, santa Maria col suo Figliuolo in braccio: dall'una parte sta quella preziosa santa Caterina, e dall'altra Moisè.*	Poggibonsi 1945: 125.
LXIV	*Porro post orationem consedimus, et inceperunt flagare desiderio panis et aquae et quilibet optabat se habere secum sportam suam et amphoram. Nescio autem, qua providentia accidit, ut ego solus mecum haberem sportam cum paximatis, ovis duris, carnibus fumigatis, et caseo, quae prome ipso tuleram, alii omnia sua inferius cum peregrinis remanentibus dimiserant, et videntes, me esse provisum, congratulabantur quidem mihi et providum me praedicabant, sibi ipsis vero indignabantur de negligentia, et petebant me unus, ut darem sibi pauxillum panis, alter modicum carnis, alius parum casei et panis, alii haustum vini quaerebant o me. Hoc ut vidi, jucundatus fui et nulli quidquam dedi, sed sportam arripui et omnia, quae in ea erant, in concavitatem petrae, quae juxta nos erat, effudi in loco, ubi caput S. Catharinae positum fuerat, et tali facetia usus nobiles et peregrinos invitavi...*	Fabri 1843: 462.

	Original text	**Reference**
LXV	*Tu nám přidaný mnich dal přinesti* porcellanu *a do nj málo toho páleného naliw k tomu wody z konwice přilil a po té nám připil a my geden druhému až sme to pálené wssecko wypili.*	Harant 1608: 85-6.
LXVI	*Proles enim hìc concepta, sancta & prophetico spiritu plena ab eis æstimatur.*	Georgius 1721: 498.
LXVII	[...] *ἐὰν τινὰς σταθῇ ἀπάνω εἰς τὴν κορυφὴν ταύτην ἕως ἑσπέρας, ὅταν ὁ Ἥλιος βασιλεύει, βλέπει ἀπάνω εἰς τὴν κορυφήν, ὄχι τοῦ βουνοῦ, ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἰσκίου του, ἕνα φῶς, ὡσὰν ἐκεῖνο ὁποῦ λέγει ἡ Θεία Γραφὴ πῶς ἐφαίνετον εἰς αὐτὴν τὴν κορυφὴν, ὅταν ἐκατέβαινεν εἰς αὐτὸ μετὰ δόξης καὶ πυρὸς καὶ γνόφου ὁ Θεὸς, καὶ ἐλάλει μὲ τὸν Μωϋσῆν.*	Nektarios 1980: 168.
LXVIII	[...] *un des points d'exploration notés parmi les DESIDERATA les plus essentiels de l'archéologie* [...]	Lottin de Laval 1855-9a: 1-31
LXIX	*Das ganze Leben und Treiben der 4 Priester und 21 Laienbrüder war wenig erbaulich, und machte den allgemeinen Eindruck eines trüben, faulen und erstaunlich unwissenden Geistes, der wie eine trübe Regenwolke auf ihnen lagert, obgleich sie unter einem ewig heitern mässig warmen Himmel wandeln, sie allein in der weiten Wüste im dunkeln Schatten der Cypressen Palmen und Oliven sich erquicken können, in kleinen doch nicht unbehaglichen Zellen um eine freundliche, im alten, einfachen Basiliken-stil erbaute, reinlich und frisch erhaltene, im Innern sogar reichgeschmückte Kirche herum wohnen, und wenn sie Sinn dafür hätten sich auch ausser*	Lepsius 1846a: 7.

	Original text	Reference
	derselben in der etwa 1500 Bände starken Bibliothek, diesem ἰατρεῖον ψυχῆς, von ihrer Langenweile heilen können.	
LXX	*Au surplus, il n'est pas bien sûr que les moines de Sainte-Catherine fussent portés à se commettre en pareille occurrence pour empêcher ou châtier le crime. Outre qu'une pareille entreprise eût été pour eux très périlleuse, ils n'ignoraient certainement pas que Palmer les avaient accusés de vie paresse, de honteuse ignorance et de goût peu édifiant pour son cognac et leur Rakı. Sa personne ne pouvait leur être particulièrement sympathique et précieuse.*	Raboisson 1887: 53.
LXXI	*Le Sinaï est un Temple; on vient s'y recueillir.*	Cart 1915: 148.
LXXII	*La dame avait déjà fait le voyage au Sinaï; mais elle aimait le désert; et y revenait pour son plaisir.* [...] *L'Anglaise voyageait sur un chameau. Elle avait adopté un costume spécial pour le désert.*	(Amedée) de Damas 1864: 267-8.
LXXIII	[...] *tam multa nova et adhuc inaudita, quanta in nullo alio nostræ ætatis libro me reperisse memini.*	Quoted in Beke 1873: 3.
LXXIV	[...] *le Couvent du Mont Sinai est habité par des hommes instruits et policés, au milieu des barbares du desert où ils vivent.*	Quoted in Grēgoriadēs 1875: 130-1 note 1.
LXXV	*Loin de les considerer comme des ignorants dépourvus de tout mérite, je dois déclarer que j'ai trouvé parmi eux, des hommes instruits, pieux et extrêmement recommandables.*	Stacquez 1865: 355, note 1.
LXXVI	*Ce sont, la plupart, des peintures byzantines, russes ou grecques, à fond d'or et d'une finesse*	Pardieu 1851: 188.

	Original text	Reference
	extrême. On admire la patience du peintre qui, dans un petit espace, a trouvé moyen de répresenter des myriades de petites figures.	
LXXVII	*Deux potages, quatre entrées, trois rôtis, salades, desserts variés, et surtout moutarde à discrétion. C'était un repas de noce de première classe, avec bombe glacée à la manne!*	Lenoir 1872: 245-6.
LXXVIII	*Tandem autem et hoc miraculum cessavit, quia vel tempus miraculorum transivit, vel quia abusus miraculorum fuit, vel quia indignitas et peccata miracula impediverunt, vel quia aliunde provisum de Deo fuit, quia est regula theologorum, quod Deus non facit miracula, nisi exigente magna necessitate.*	Fabri 1843: 492.

APPENDIX II. Pilgrims and travellers

This list of names and dates of travellers to Horeb and Hagia Koryphē is not meant to be comprehensive and only those who visited between the fourth and the early twentieth century and were discussed or mentioned in the thesis are included. Sinai monks or itinerant monks like Julian Saba and Symeon the Elder (section 2.4.2), John Moschos (section 2.2), Qays and Pachōmios (section 4.1.1) or Bononius (section 3.4), whose visits were longer and of a different character, are not included. Although most travellers must have made their way to Hagia Koryphē, the dates of their ascent are not always stated. Only two clearly did not ascend (Miss Platt and Carsten Niebuhr).

Nationalities: (Am) American, (A) Arab, (Au) Austrian, (B) British, (Be) Belgian, (C) Canadian, (Cz) Czech, (D) Dutch, Da (Danish), (E) Egyptian, (F) French, (Fl) Flemish, (Fr) Frank, (G) German (includes Prussians, Bavarians etc.), (H) Greek, (I) Italian, (J) Jewish, (K) Kurdish, (R) Roman / Byzantine, (Ru) Russian, (Sp) Spanish, (Sv) Swedish, (Sw) Swiss, (U) Ukrainian.

An asterisk (*) denotes a probably fictitious account or an uncertain visit. Accounts widely acknowledged as fabricated (for example by 'Johan de Mandeville,' see section 4.2.3) are not included.

Months in italic Latin numerals.

Name	Dates	at Horeb	on Hagia Koryphē
ᶜAbbās Pasha (E)	1812-1854	1853	
Abū 'l-Mughīra (A)	7th century	*III* 684 (669, 699)	
Adams, William Henry D. (B)	1828-1891	before 1879	
Adornes, Anselme (Fl)	15th century	*VIII* 1470	
Aerts, Jean (Fl)	15th century	1481	
Affagart, Greffin (F)	1490/5-1557	1534	
Amedée of Damascus (F)	19th century	1859	
Anglure, Ogier d' (F)	14th century	6-10 *XI* 1395	
Anonymous (?)	13th century		
Anonymous (?)	13th century		
Anonymous (?)	13th century	*circa* 1231	
Anonymous (?)	13th century	before 1265	
Anonymous (?)	13th century	before 1265	
Anonymous (F)	14th century		
Anonymous (?)	14th century		

Name	Dates	at Horeb	on Hagia Koryphē
Anonymous (?)	15th century	16-19 *X* 1486	17 *X* 1486
Anonymous (?)	16th century	mid-16th century	
Arundale, Francis (B)	1807-1853	*IX* 1833	
Auvergne, *Monseigneur* (F)	1793-1836	21-22 *V* 1835	21 *V* 1835
Van Aylde Jongue, Ida: see Saint-Elme			
Baldensel, Wilhelm von (G)	14th century	1336	
Bankes, William John (B)	1786-1855	1815	
Barron, T. (B)	19th century	before 1868-1869	
Bartlett, Samuel Colcord (Am)	1817-1898	19-23 *II* 1874	20 *II* 1874
Bartlett, William Henry (B)	1809-1854	12-20 *X* 1845	
Baudouin, lord of Launay (F)	17th century	10-13 *X* 1631	
Baumgarten, Martin (G)	15-16th century	17-20 *X* 1507	17 *X* 1507
Bausman, Benjamin (Am)	1824-1909	16-20 *III* 1861	17 *III* 1861
Beadnell, Hugh J. L. (B)	1874-1944	1921, 1923-1924	
Beamont, William John (B)	1828-1868	1853, 5-7 *XII* 1860	6 *XII* 1860
Beck, Georg (G)	16th century	13-16 *XI* 1565	
Belon du Mans, Pierre (F)	1518-1564	1547	
Beneshevich, Vladimir N. (Ru)	1884-1938	1907, 1908, 1911	
Bennet, Miss (B)	19th century	before 1830	
Bensly, Agnes Dorothee (G)	19th century	5 *II* (or later) - 20 *III* 1893	*III* 1893
Bern, Jacob von (G)	14th century	10 *IX* 1346	
Bernatz, Johann Martin (G)	1802-1878	28 *II* - 7 *III* 1837?	2 *III* 1837?
Bianchi, Noe (I) *	15th century	15th century	
Bida, Alexandre (F)	1823-1895	28 *II* - 4 *III* 1861	2 *III* 1861
Bird (Bishop), I. (B)	1831-1904	1878 or later	
Bonar, Horatius (B)	1808-1889	26-29 *I* 1856	28 *I* 1856
Bonnat, Léon Joseph Florentin (F)	1833-1922	*c.* 1868	
Booth, Miss (B)	19th century	late 1870s	
Borrer, Dawson (B)	19th century	23-27 *III* 1843	24 *III* 1843
Brabant, duke of (Be)	1835-1909	7-9 *II* 1863	8 *II* 1863
Brasca, Santo (I)	1444-1522	1480	
Bräuning, Johann Jacob (G)	16th century	19 *VIII* 1579	
Brémond, Gabriel de (F)	17th century	between 1643 and 1645	
Breydenbach, Bernhard von (G)	died in 1497	22-27 *IX* 1483	

Name	Dates	at Horeb	on Hagia Koryphē
Brockbank, Oliver (B)	19-20th century	1914	
Brocklehusrt, Miss (B)	19th century	late 1870s	
Broquière, Bertrandon de la (F)	15th century	1432	
Browne, William George (B)	1768-1813	after 22 *III* 1793	
Brugsch, Heinrich F. K. (G)	1827-1894	1-4 *V* 1865 and later	
Burckhardt, Johann Ludwig (Sw)	1784-1817	1-4, 18-30 *V* 1816	20 *V* 1816
Buxton, Edward North (B)	1840-1924	15-17 *II* 1894	17 *II* 1894
Capodilista, Gabriele (I)	15th century	18-22 *VIII* 1458	
Carlier de Pinon, Jean le (F)	16th century	1579	
Carne, John (B)	1789-1844	6-10 *XI* 1821	9 *XI* 1821
Cart, Léon (F)	1869-1916	before 1915	
Catherwood, Frederick (B) *	1799-1854		
Chartres, Robert-Philippe duke of (F)	1840-1910	1860	
Conyngham, Francis (B)	19th century	1868	
Cook, Thomas (B)	1808-1892	1868 and possibly later	
Coppin, Jean (F)	17th century	mid-1640s	
Coutelle, J.-M. (F)	1748-1835	24-28 *X* 1800	26? *X* 1800
Crossley, Henry (B)	19th century	before 1860	
Currelly, Charles Trick (C)	1876-1957	spring 1906	
Daniel, William (B)	17-18th century	*XII* 1701	
Daniell, Edward Thomas (B)	1804-1842	1841	
Dauzats, Adrien (F)	1804-1868	1830	
D(e)ardel, Jean de (F)	14th century	1377	
Della Valle, Pietro (I)	1586-1652	24-26 *XII* 1615	
Didier, Charles (Sw)	1805-1864	1845	
Döbel, Ernst Christof (G)	19th century	27 *X* - 6 *XI* 1833	28 or 29 *X* 1833
Dobson, Augusta Mary Rachel (B)	1872-1923	*XII* 1922 - *I* 1923	
Dorndorff, Rupertus Lentulus (G)	16th century	1583?	
Durbin, John Price (Am)	1800-1876	4-7 *II* 1843	5 *II* 1843
Ebers, Georg Moritz (G)	1837-1898		
Ecklin von Aarau, Daniel (G)	16th century	1553	
Egeria (R)	4th century	*XI* 383 - *I* 384	17 *XII* 383
Van Egmont, Johannes Ægidius (D)	1697-1747	*c.* 1720	
'Ernoul' (F) *	13th century		

Name	Dates	at Horeb	on Hagia Koryphē
Fabri, Felix (Sw)	*c.*1441-1502	22-27 *IX* 1483	
Farman, Elbert (Am)	1831-1911	1908	
Fauvel, Robert (F)	17th century	10-13 *X* 1631	
Fermanel, Gilles (F)	died 1661	10-13 *X* 1631	
Femberger von Egenberg, A. G. C. (G)	1557-1594	18-25 *X* 1580	
Field, Henry Martyn (Am)	1822-1907	spring 1882	
Fisk, George (B)	19th century	21-25 *V* 1842	23 *V* 1842
Fraas, Oscar (G)	1824-1897		
Frameynsperg, Rudolf de (G)	14th century	1346	
Franciscan monks (five) (?)	14th century	1304	
Franz Joseph Otto, archduke (Au)	1865-1906	6-7 *III* 1894	
Frescobaldi, Leonardo (I)	14th century	28 or 29 *X* - 2 *XI* 1384	
Frith, Francis (B)	1822-1898	between 1856 and 1857	
Fromont and his brother (Fr)	9th century	mid-9th century	
Fumet, lord of (F)	16th century	1547	
Fürer von Haimendorf, Christoph. (G)	16th century	13-16 *XI* 1565	
Furtenbach, David (G)	16th century	17-29 *XI* 1561	
Gabriel of Soupakion (H)	13-14th century	before 1312	
Gadsby, John (B)	*c.*1809-1893	6-8 *III* 1864	7 *III* 1864
Gasparin, Valérie Boissier de (F)	1813-1894	24-28 *III* 1848	25 *III* 1848
Géramb, M.-J. (earlier F.) (F)	1772-1848	25 *II* - 5 *III* 1833	1 *III* 1833
Gérôme, Jean Léon (F)	1824-1904	*c.* 1868	
Ghistelle, Josse van (Fl)	15th century	between 1481 and 1484	
Gibson, Margaret Dunlop (B)	1843-1920	1892 and later	
Gogara, Basil [*sic*] (Ru)	17th century	*c.* 1634	
Golding, Louis (B)	1895-1958	before 1938	
Gotch, Paul (B)	1915-2008	before 1945	
Graul, Carl (G)	1814-1864	*III* 1853	5 *III* 1853
Gregor (or Georg) of Gaming (G)	15-16th century	17-20 *X* 1507	17 *X* 1507
Gucci, Giorgio (I)	14th century	28 or 29 *X* - 2 *XI* 1384	
Hachette, Georges (F)	1838-1892	28 *II* - 4 *III* 1861	2 *III* 1861
Hamilton, James (B)	19th century	1854	
Harant, Krystoff (Cz)	1564-1621	*X* 1598	18 *X* 1598
Harff, Arnold von (G)	15th century	between 1496 and 1499	

Name	Dates	at Horeb	on Hagia Koryphē
Hart, Henry Chichester (B)	19th century	*XI* 1883	20 *XI* 1883
Hellfrich, Johann (G)	16th century	*II* 1566	
Henniker, Sir Frederick (B)	1793-1825	21?-24 *IV* 1820	22? *IV* 1820
Hese, Johannes Witte de (D)*	15th century	1489	
Holland, Frederick Whitmore (B)	19th century	1868-1869	
Hornby, Emily (B)	1834-1906	2-6 *III* 1899	3 *III* 1899
Hull, Edward (I)	1829-1917	19-22? *XI* 1883	20 *XI* 1883
Hume, W. F. (B)	19-20th century	before 1906	
Hyde, John (B)	died in 1825	1819	
Jacob, rabbi (J)	12th century	before 1187	
Jacopo da Verona (I)	14th century	arrived 10 *IX* 1335	
Jarvis, Claude Scudamore (B)	1879-1952	1920s-1930s	
Jaschaw, Georg (G)	16th century	17-29 *XI* 1561	
Jullien, M. (F)	19th century	*XI* 1889	18 *XI* 1889
Kapustin, Antonin (Ru)	1817-1894	1870	
Katzenellenbogen, Philip von (G)	15th century	*X* 1433	
Kellogg, Miner Kilbourne (Am)	1814-1889	*II-III* 1844	
Kergorlay, Jean de (F)	19-20th century	spring 1906	
Kiechel, Samuel (G)	1563-1619	8-11 *VI* 1588	
Kinnear, John Gardiner (B)	19th century	18-22 *II* 1839	
Koller, Baron (B)	19th century	*III* 1840	
Kondakov, Nikodim (Ru)	1844-1925	1881	
Kondokoff, N. P. [*sic*] (Ru)	16th century	between 1582 and 1594	
Korobeinikoff, Triphon [*sic*] (Ru)	16th century	between 1582 and 1594	
Kosmas (R?)	6-10th century		
Kosmas 'Indikopleustēs' (R)	6th century	first half of 6th century	
Kræmer, Robert Fredrik von (Sv)	1791-1880	17-20 *IV* 1862	
Laborde, Léon E. S. J. marquis de (F)	1807-1869	1828	
Lagrange, Marie-Joseph (F)	1855-1938	1893, *II* 1897	26 *II* 1897
Lannoy, Ghillebert de (F)	1386-1462	1401, 1421/1422	
Lear, Edward (B)	1812-1888	25-28 *I* 1849	
Leman, Ulrich (G)	15th century	*VI-VII* 1473	
Lengherand, Georges (F?)	died in 1500	16-19 *X* 1486	17 *X* 1486
Lenoir, Paul (F)	1826-1881	*c.* 1868	

Name	Dates	at Horeb	on Hagia Koryphē
Lepsius, Karl Richard (G)	1810-1884	23-27 *III* 1845	24 *III* 1845
Lewis, Agnes Smith (B)	1843-1926	1892 and later	
Lewis, John Frederick (B)	1805-1876	1842?	
Lichtenstein, Hans Ludwig von (G)	16th century	1-7 *IX* 1587	3 *IX* 1587
Linant de Bellefonds, L. M. A. (F)	1799-1883	1828	
Lindsay, Alexander W. C. (B)	1812-1880	16 *III* - 17 *IV* 1837	21 *III* 1837
Loftus, Jane (B)	19th century	6-10 *III* 1868	7 *III* 1868
Lombay, G. de (F)	19th century	*III* 1887	
Loti, Pierre (F)	1850-1923	1894	
Lottin de Laval, Pierre Victor (F)	1810-1903	*III* 1850	8 *III* 1850
Löwenstein, Count Albrecht zu (G)	16th century	17-29 *XI* 1561	
MacDonald, James (B)	1822-1885	1868-1869	
Manning, Samuel (B)	1822-1881	before 1875	
Martineau, Harriet (B)	1802-1876	*III* 1846	
Martoni, Niccolò de (I)	14th century	*IX* 1394	
Maughan, William Charles (B)	died in 1914	29 *II* - 4 *III* 1872	2 *III* 1872
Measor, Henry Paul (B)	died 1865	26?-29 *III* 1842	28 *III* 1842
Meggen, Jodocus van (Sw)	16th century	1542	
Meingre de Boucicault, Jean le (F)	14th century	1389	
Meistermann, Barnabé (F)	19-20th century	before 1909	
Meuillon, Guillaume de (F)	14th century	between 1390 and 1391	
Milly, Philippe de (F)	1120-1171	1160s	
Mirebel, Claude (F?)	15th century	mid-15th century	
Monconys, Balthasar de (F)	1608-1665	26 *IV* - 2 *V* 1647	29 *IV* 1647
Monopole, Antoine de (F)	14th century	1377	
Morison, Antoine (F)	17th century	20 *XI* - 2 *XII* 1697	23 - 24 *XI* 1697
Morton, Henry Vollam (B)	1892-1979		
Mouskes, Philippe (F)	*c.*1220-1282	second half of 13th c.	
Muḥammad ʿAlī Pasha (E)	*c.*1769-1849		
Münster, Hans Ludwig von (G)	16th century	1-7 *IX* 1587	3 *IX* 1587
Neitzschitz, Georg Christoff von (G)	17th century	*VII* 1636	7 *VII* 1636
Neuhaus, Otto von: see Baldensel			
Newbold, Captain (B)	19th century	*VI* 1847?	
Niebuhr, Carsten (Da)	1733-1815	*IX* 1761	Did not ascend.

Name	Dates	at Horeb	on Hagia Koryphē
Obicini, Tommaso (I)	1585-1632	between 1612 and 1621	
Oerttel von Augsburg, Emanuel (G)	16th century	1561	
Olin, Stephen (Am)	1797-1851	13-18 *III* 1840	14 *III* 1840
Orléans, Louis-Philippe-Albert of (F)	1838-1894	1860	
Ouspensky, B. [*sic*] (Ru ? U ?)	19th century	*c.* 1845	
Palerne, Jean (F)	16th century	21-24 *VIII* 1581	
Palmer, Edward Henry (B)	1840-1882	1867-1868 and later	
Palmer, Henry Spencer (B)	1838-1893	1868-1869 and later?	
Pardieu, Charles count de (F)	19th century	8-11 *X* 1849	
Philippe d'Alsace (F)	1143-1191	1117	
Philippe d'Artois (F)	14th century	1389	
Piacenza, pilgrim of (R)	6th century	550s	
Piellat, count de (F)	19th century	1897?	
Pigafetta. Filippo (I)	16th century	after 14 *II* 1577	
Platt, Miss (B)	19th century	28 *III* - 2 *IV* 1839	Did not ascend.
Pococke, Richard (B)	1704-1765	Easter 1739	
Poggibonsi, Niccolò da (I)	14th century	spring 1349	
Poncet, Charles Jacques (F)	17-18th century	1701	
Poole, Reginald Stuart (B) *	1832-1895		
Posniakov, Vasiliĭ (Ru)	16th century	between 1558 and 1561	
Quaresmius, Franciscus (I)	1583-1650	before 1639	
Raboisson, Antoine (F)	19th century	*III* 1882	13 *III* 1882
Randall, David Austin (Am)	1813-1884	3-6 *III* 1861	4 *III* 1861
Rauter, Ludwig von (G)	died in 1615	*I* - *II* / 1569	
Raynald de Châtillon (F)	1125-1187	1117	
Reboldis, Antonius de (I)	14th century	26 *I* - 4 *II* 1331	29 *I* 1331
Rendall, Montague John (B)	1862-1950	10?-13 *III* 1911 or before	12 *III* 1911 or before
Ridgaway, Henry Bascom (Am)	1830-1895	16-21 *III* 1874	17 *III* 1874
Rieter, Sebald (G)	15th century	1479	
Roberts, David (B)	1796-1864	18-22 *II* 1839	
Robinson, Edward (Am)	1794-1863	23-29 *III* 1838	26 *III* 1838
Roche-Dragon, marquise de (F)	19th century	1845	
Rogers, Mary Eliza (B) *	19th century	before 1883?	
Rotenham (G)	16th century	1-7 *IX* 1587	3 *IX* 1587

Name	Dates	at Horeb	on Hagia Koryphē
Rowley, Charlotte (B)	born in 1811	Christmas 1835	
Rumpff, Sigmund (G)	16th century	17-29 *XI* 1561	
Rüppell, Eduard (G)	1794-1884	*V* 1822, *IV* 1826, *V* 1831	7 *V* 1831
Russegger, Joseph Ritter von (Au)	1802-1863	22 *X* - 1 *XI* 1838	28 *X* 1838
Rusticiana (R)	6th century	between 592 and 594	
Sachsen, Johann Georg duke of (G)	1869-1938	*X* 1910	
Saint-Elme, Ida de (D)	19th century	1828	
Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb (K)	*c.*1138-1193	1174-1176	
Sandys, George (B) *	1577-1644	after 1610	
Sanseverino, Roberto da (I)	1417-1487	18-22 *VIII* 1458	
Sargenton-Galichon, Adélaïde (F)	19-20th century	20-24 *II* 1902	22 *II* 1902
Schaff, Philip (Am)	1819-1893	late 1870s	
Schubert, Gotthilf H. von (G)	1780-1860	28 *II* - 7 *III* 1837	2 *III* 1837
Schulenburg, Alexander von (G)	16th century	13-16 *XI* 1565	
Schuueicker, Solomon (G)	16th century	1581	
Seetzen, Ulrich Jasper (G)	1767-1811	*IV* 1807	13 or 16 *IV* 1807
Séjourné, R. P. (F)	19th century	1893	
Shaw, Thomas (B)	1694-1751		
Sicard, Claude (F)	18th century	1720, 12 *IX* - 1 *X* 1722	16 *IX* 1722
Sigoli, Simone (I)	14th century	28 or 29 *X* - 2 *XI* 1384	
Sparnau, Peter (G)	14th century	1385	
Stacquez, H. T. J. (Be?)	19th century	7-9 *II* 1863	8 *II* 1863
Stanley, Arthur Penrhyn (B)	1815-1881	between 1852 and 1853	
Stephens, John Lloyd (Am)	1805-1852	*III* 1836	
Stewart, Frederick William (B)	1805-1872	1842?	
Stewart, Robert Walter (B)	19th century	1854	
Stochove, Vincent (Be)	1605-1679	10-13 *X* 1631	
Strauss, Friedrich Adolph (G)	1817-1888	28 *II* - 5 *III* 1845	1 *III* 1845
Sudheim, Ludolf von (G)	14th century	between 1336 and 1341	
Suriano, Francesco (I)	1450-*c.*1529	1494	
Sutton, Arthur Warwick (B)	1854-1925	16-19 *III* 1912	
Swinburne, Thomas de (B)	14th century	*XI* 1392	
Tafur, Pero (Sp)	1406/10-*c.*1484	1435 or 1437	
Tennstädt, Ulrich von (G)	14th century	1385	

Name	Dates	at Horeb	on Hagia Koryphē
Teufel von Krottendorf, Hans C. (G)	1567-1642	18-23 *X* 1588	
Thenaud, Jean (F)	15-16th century	*VII* 1512	
Thevet, André (F)	1516-1592	spring 1552	
Thietmar (G)	12-13th century	1217	
Thou, François Auguste de (F)	1607-1642	1628	
Tischendorf, L. F. Constantin (G)	1815-1874	1844, 1853, 1859	
Tobin, Catherine (B)	19th century	1853	
Tucher, Johannes (G)	15th century	1479	
Turner, William (B)	1792-1867	*VIII* 1815	5 *VIII* 1815
Tyrwhitt, Richard St John (B)	1827-1895	*II* 1862	
Ubayya (A)	7th century	*XII* 683	
Ulrich II of Mecklenburg-Stargard (G)	15th century	autumn 1470	
Uspenskiĭ, Porfiriĭ (U)	1804-1885	1845	
Valimbert, Jacques de (F)	16th century	1584	
Vichensky, Hippolyte [*sic*] (Ru)	17-18th century	*c.* 1708	
Wallenfels (G)	16th century	1-7 *IX* 1587	3 *IX* 1587
Wellsted, James Raymond (B)	1805-1842	after 11 *I* 1833, after 23 *IX* 1836	
Wilson, Sir Charles William (B)	1836-1905	1868-1869 and later?	
Wolff, Joseph (G)	1795-1862	6-10 *XI* 1821, 1836	
Wurmser, Jacob (G)	16th century	17-29 *XI* 1561	
Wyatt, Claude W. (B)	19th century	1868-1869	
Zachos, Agamemnōn (H)	20th century	25 *VIII* - 14 *IX* 1925	31 *VIII* 1925
Zizinia, Étienne (H)	born in 1823	7-9 *II* 1863	8 *II* 1863
Zülhhart, Wolf von (G)	15th century	30 *X* - early *XI* 1495	

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbreviations

AA	:	*Archäologischer Anzeiger.*
AB	:	*Analecta Bollandiana.*
AnIsl	:	*Annales Islamologiques*
AOL	:	*Archives de l'Orient Latin*
BAR	:	British Archaeological Reports.
BASOR	:	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research.*
BiblArch	:	*Biblical Archaeologist.*
BSOAS	:	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies.*
Byzantion	:	*Byzantion. Revue Internationale des Études Byzantines.*
BZ	:	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift.*
CCSL	:	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina.
CSCO	:	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium.
DOP	:	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers.*
*DTC**	:	*Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique.*
IEJ	:	*Israel Exploration Journal.*
JSL	:	*Journal of Sacred Literature.*
LA	:	*Studii Biblici Franciscani Liber Annuus.*
Madras Journal	:	*Madras Journal of Literature and Science.*
MGH	:	Monumenta Germaniae Historica.
ODB	:	*The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium.*
PEQ	:	*Palestine Exploration (Fund) Quarterly (Statement).*
*PG**	:	J. - P. Migne, editor, *Patrologiæ Cursus Completus, Series Græca.*
*PL**	:	J. - P. Migne, editor, *Patrologiæ Cursus Completus, Series Prima.*
QEDEM	:	Monographs of the Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
QSA	:	*Quaderni di Studi Arabi.*
RB	:	*Revue Biblique (Internationale).*
RC	:	*Revue Catholique.*
*RE**	:	*Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, neue Bearbeitung, begonnen von Georg Wissowa.
SA	:	*Σιναϊτικά Ανάλεκτα* (*Analecta Sinaitica*).
Tel Aviv	:	*Tel Aviv. Journal of the Tel Aviv University Institute of Archaeology.*
ZDPV	:	*Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palaestina-Vereins.*

* References to *DTC*, Mansi 1771, *PG*, *PL* and *RE* are to columns and not pages.

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Figure 1. Sinai Peninsula. Map of the principal mountains and valleys.

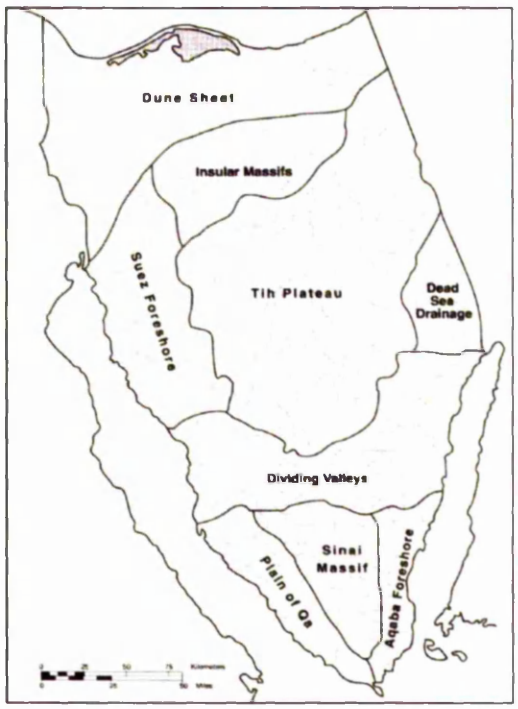


Figure 2. Sinai Peninsula. Map of the geomorphic regions.

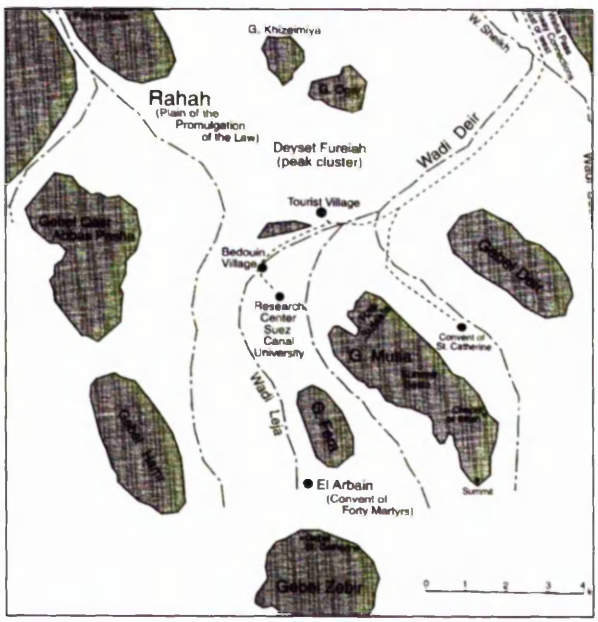


Figure 3. Horeb. Map of the area.

Place names in the map	Place names used in the text
Chapel of Elijah	Prophētēs Hēlias
El Arbain	Hagioi Tessarakonta
Gebel Deir	Hagia Epistēmē
G. Fera	Jabal Fara'
G. Musa	Horeb
Gebel St Catherine	Hagia Aikaterinē
Rahah	al-Rāḥa
Ras Sufsafa	Hagia Zōnē
Summit	Hagia Koryphē
Wadi Deir	Wādī 'l-Dayr
Wadi Leja	Wādī al-Lajā'

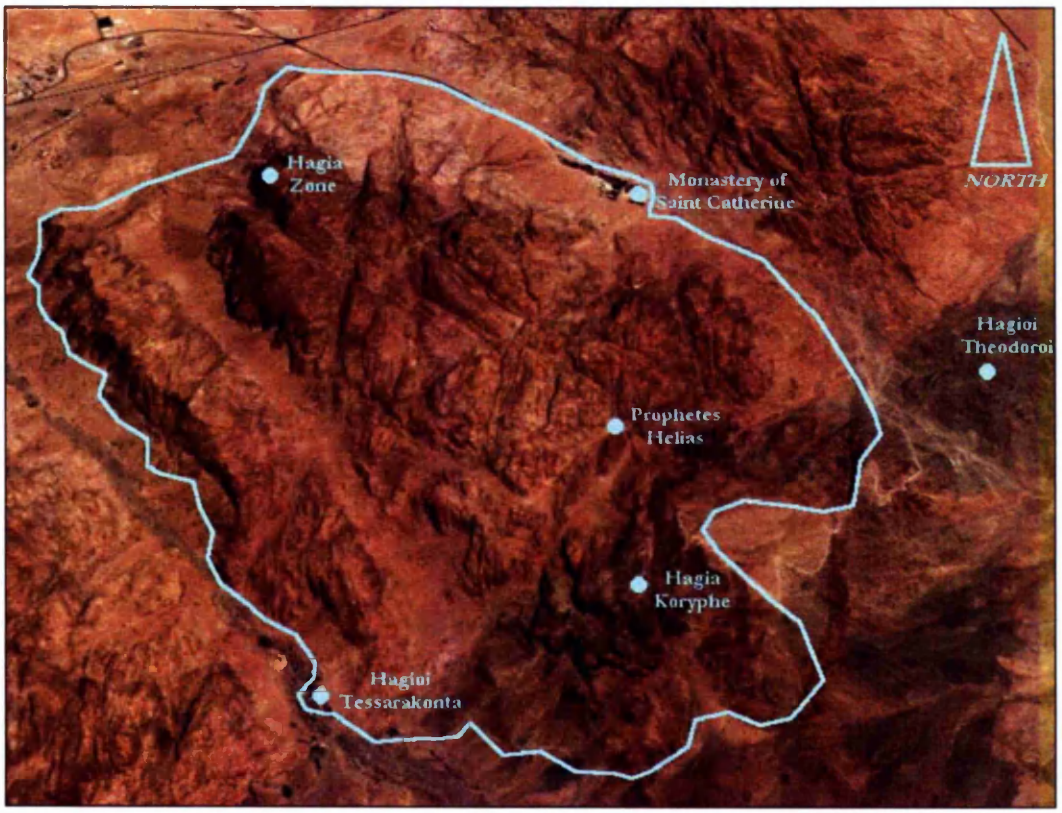
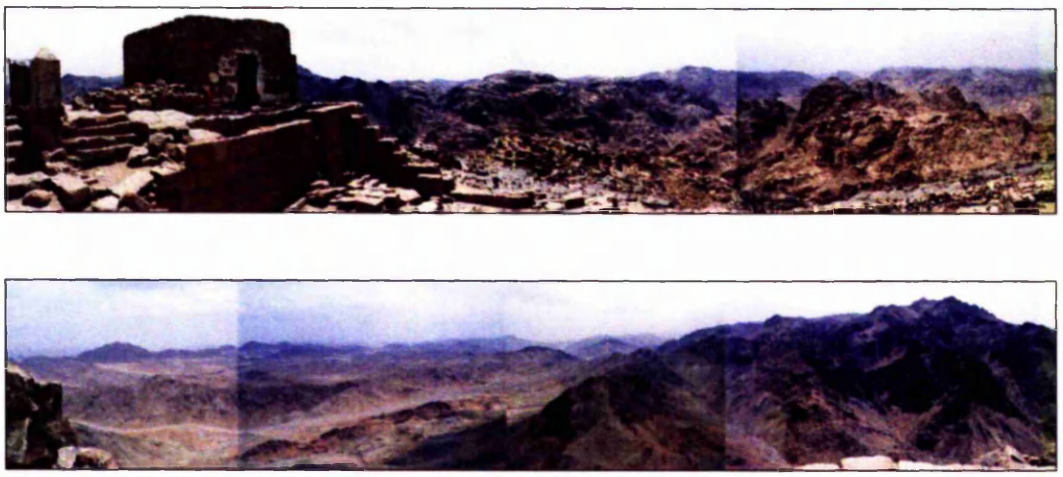


Figure 4. Horeb. Satellite photograph of the area.



Figures 5 and 6. Hagia Koryphē. Photographic views from the summit, looking W-NW (top) and E-SE (bottom).

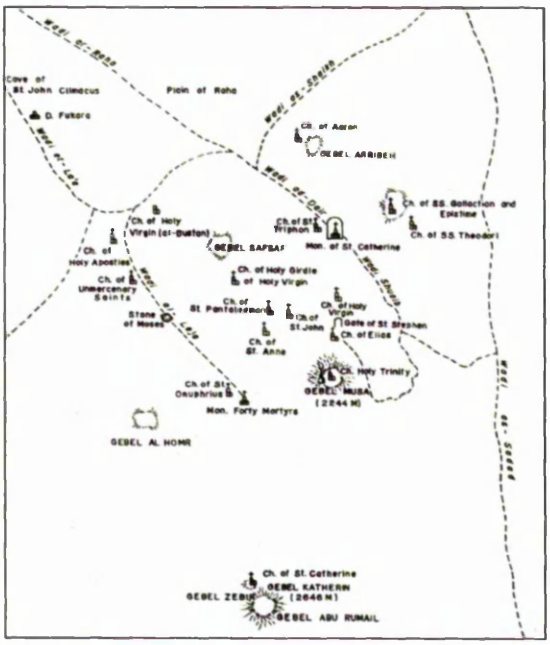


Figure 7. Horeb. Map of holy places.

Placenames in the map	**Placenames used in the text**
Church of Elias	Prophētēs Hēlias
Church of SS. Gallaction and Epistime	Chapel of Saints Galaktiōn and Epistēmē
Church of SS. Theodori	Hagioi Theodōroi
Gebel Musa	Hagia Koryphē
Gebel Safsaf	Hagia Zōnē
Gebel Zebir	Hagia Aikaterinē
Mon. Forty Martyrs	Hagioi Tessarakonta
Plain of Raha	al-Rāḥa
Wadi ad-Dair	Wādī 'l-Dayr
Wadi al-Leja	Wādī al-Lajā'

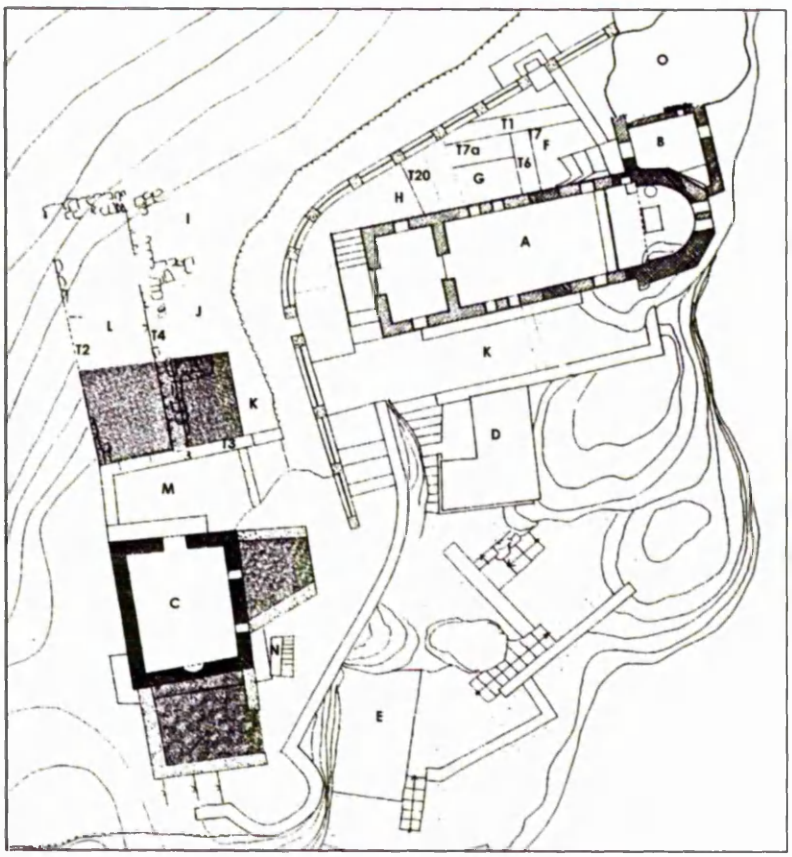


Figure 8. Hagia Koryphē. Ground-plan.

A: Hagia Triada Chapel.
B: *Parakella*.
C: Mosque.
D: Watertank.
E: Cell.
F: Building A.
G: Space B.
H: Space C.
I: North aisle of basilica.
J: Nave of basilica.
K: South aisle of basilica.
L: Narthex of basilica.
M: Mosque courtyard.
N: Cave A.
O: Rock with cave B.

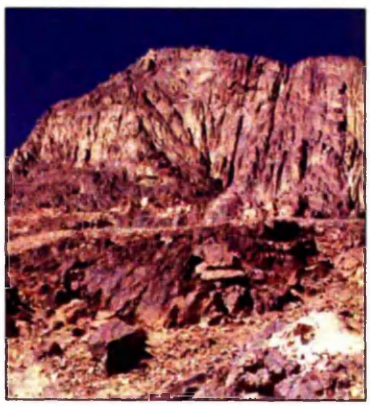


Figure 9. Hagia Koryphē. Photographic view from the east.
The eastern slope of the summit is practically inaccessible.

Figure 10. Hagia Koryphē. Photographic view from the west.
The western slope of the summit rises more gently. To the left can be seen the façade of the chapel of Hagia Triada, and to the right, the mosque. The western wall of the basilica narthex is also visible below the chapel.

Figure 11. Prophētēs Hēlias. Photographic view from Hagia Koryphē, looking south.
The flight of steps leading up from the Monastery of Saint Catherine ends in the narrow chute visible to the right of the small garden.

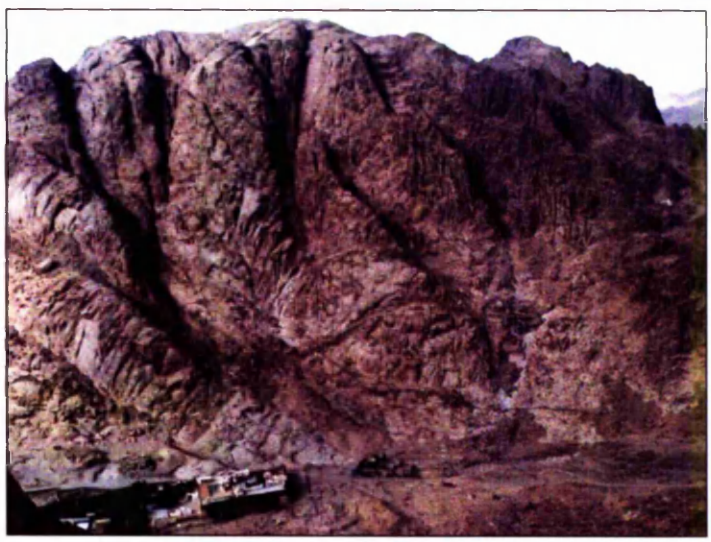


Figure 12. Hagia Epistēmē. Photographic view from the north-eastern slope of the Horeb.
The Monastery of Saint Catherine is visible at its foot, the chapel of Saints Galaktiōn and Epistēmē to the right.

Figure 13. Hagia Koryphē. The mosque. Photographic view from the east.
The wall below it (in the foreground) hides the opening of cave A; it would not be there before the twentieth century. In the background, Hagia Aikaterinē is visible.

Figure 14. Hagia Koryphē. Cave A. Photographic view from the north.
The *mihrab* on the southern wall of cave A is visible.

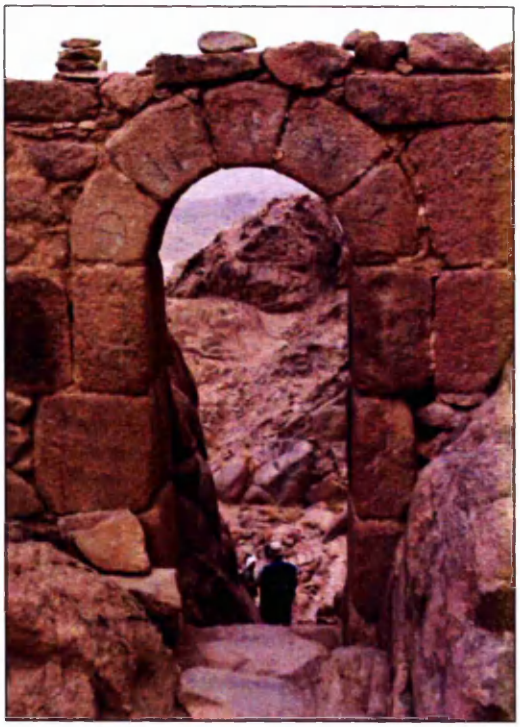


Figure 15. Gateway of Confession and steps to Hagia Koryphē ('Path of Moses'). Photographic view looking down.

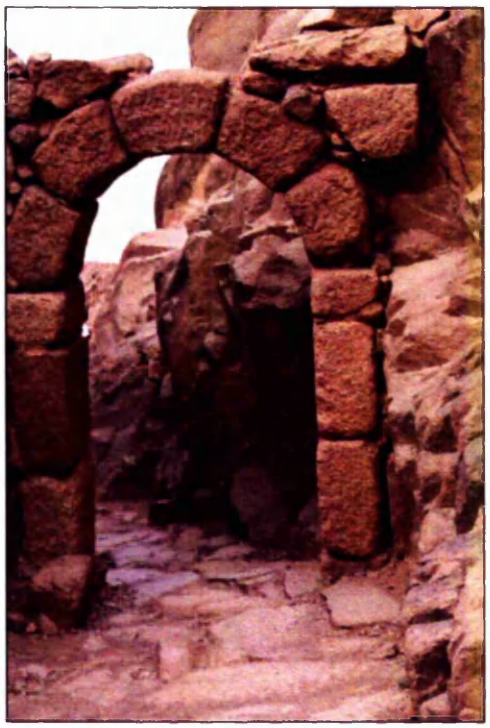


Figure 16. Gateway of Saint Stephen and steps to Hagia Koryphē ('Path of Moses'). Photographic view looking down.

Figure 17. Hagioi Theodōroi and 'Path of the Pasha.' Photographic view looking east.

Figure 18. (from left to right) 'Path of the Pasha,' 'Path of Moses,' Hagia Koryphē and Monastery of Saint Catherine. Photographic view from the western end of Hagia Epistēmē.

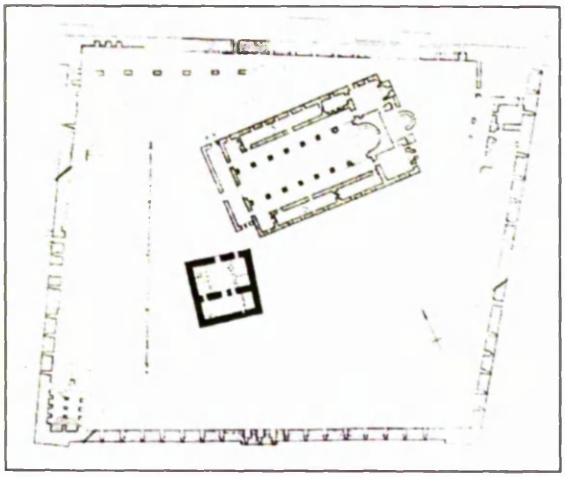


Figure 19. Justinianic fortress, later Monastery of Saint Catherine. Ground-plan.
The fourth century tower, outlined in black, is visible to the southwest of the *katholikon*.

Figure 20. Monastery of Saint Catherine. Photographic view from the northeast.
The roof of the building corresponding to the fourth century tower is visible to the southwest of the *katholikon*.

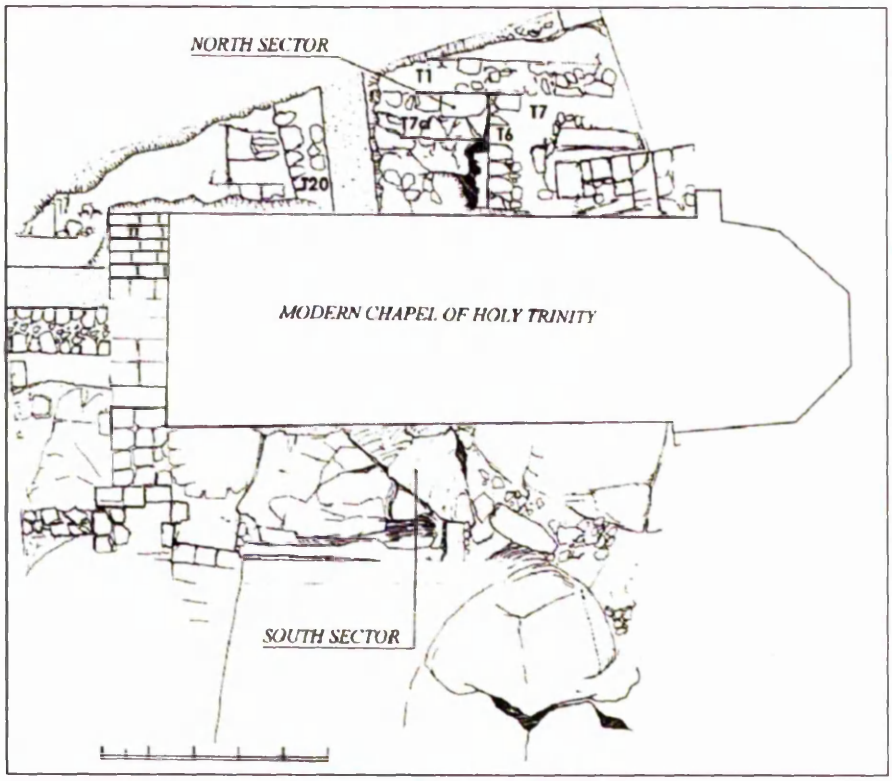


Figure 21. Hagia Koryphē. Ground-plan of the earliest buildings in relation to the 1934 chapel of Hagia Triada.

Figure 22 (left). Hagia Koryphē. Wall T1 (to the left) and wall T7 (to the right). Photographic view from the west.

Figure 23 (bottom). Hagia Koryphē. Wall T7 (to the left), wall T1 (to the right, in the sunlight) and wall T6. Photographic view from the east.

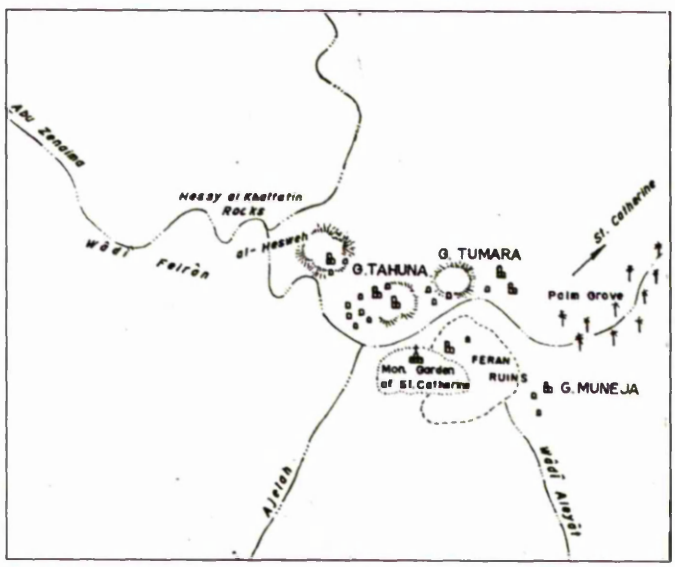


Figure 24. Pharan. Map of the area.

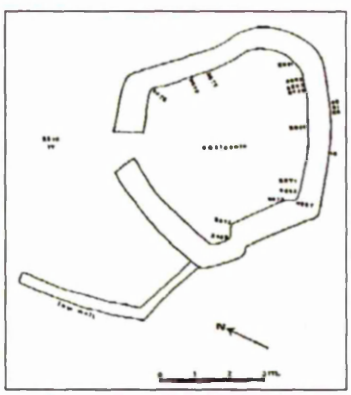


Figure 25. Jabal Mu'tamr in Pharan. Ground-plan of the Nabatean peak sanctuary.

Figure 26. Madaba. *Mount Sinai*. Mosaic floor. *AD* 560-5.

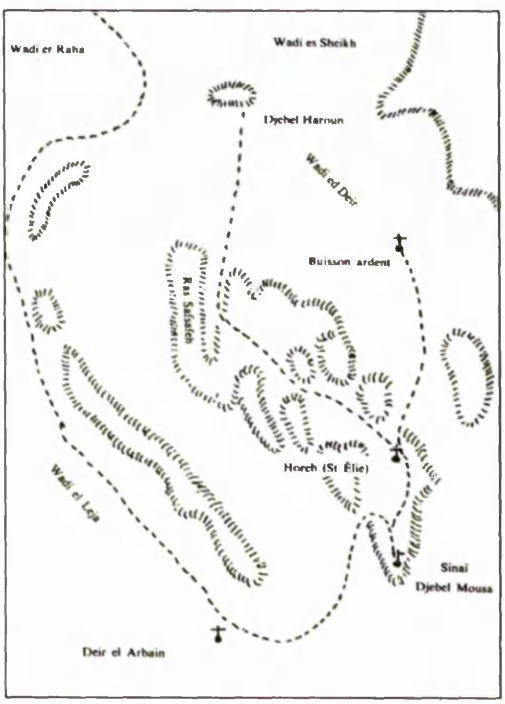
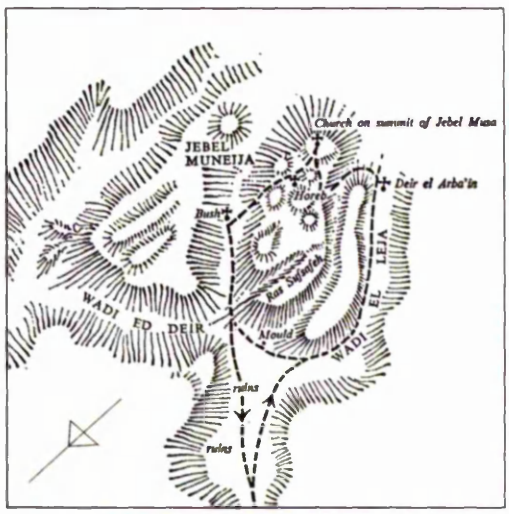


Figure 27 (left). Map of possible itineraries of Egeria around Hagia Koryphē, *AD* 383.

Figure 28 (bottom). Map of the most probable itinerary of Egeria around Hagia Koryphē, *AD* 383.



Place names (figure 27)	Place names (figure 28)	Place names used in the text
Horeb (St Élie)	Horeb	Prophētēs Hēlias
Ras Safsafeh	Ras Sufsafeh	Hagia Zōnē
Djebel Mousa	Church on summit of Jebel Musa	Hagia Koryphē
Wadi el Leja	Wadi el Leja	Wādī al-Lajā'
Deir el Arbain	Deir el Arba'in	Hagioi Tessarakonta
Wadi er Raha		al-Rāḥa
	Jebel Muneija	Hagioi Theodōroi

Figure 29. Hagia Aikaterinē. Photographic view from Hagia Koryphē.
In Wādī al-Lajā', between the two mountains, the garden of Hagioi Tessarakonta is visible (bottom right). From this point Egeria started her ascent to Hagia Koryphē.

Figure 30. Horeb. Prayer niche.
Hagia Koryphē is visible in the distance.

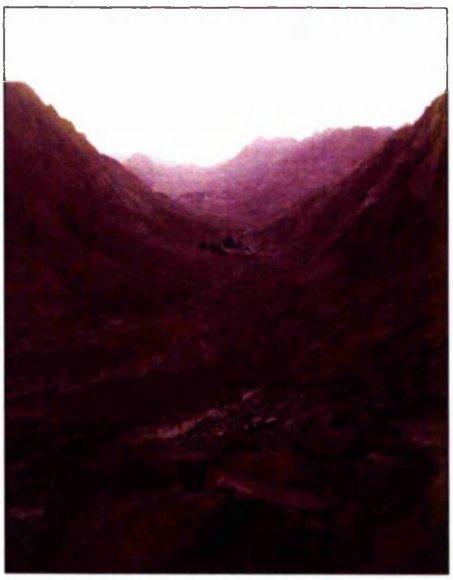


Figure 31 (top). Monastery of Saint Catherine in Wādī 'l-Dayr. Photographic view, from the east.

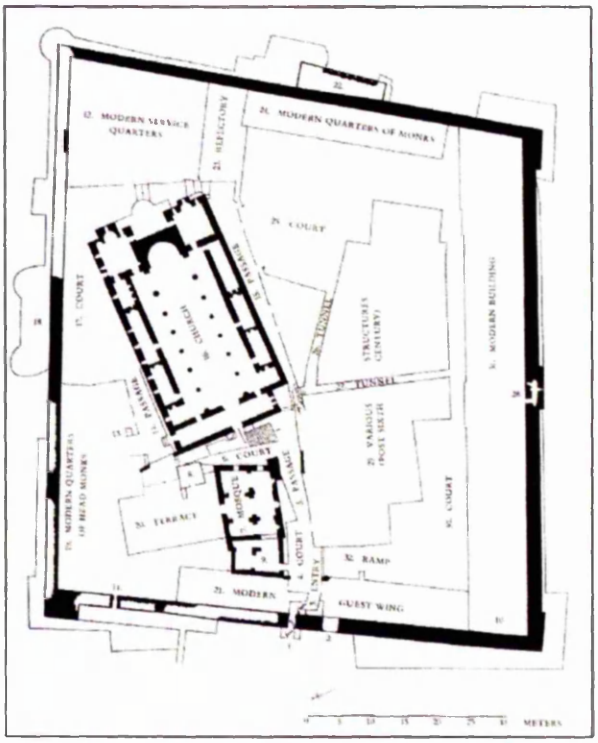


Figure 32 (right). Monastery of Saint Catherine. Ground-plan.
Sixth century buildings in black, later buildings in outline.

Figure 33 (left). Monastery of Saint Catherine. Photographic view of the present gateway, on the western wall.
The original gateway was further to the right.

Figure 34 (top). Monastery of Saint Catherine. Photographic view of the eastern wall, from the northeast.
The portion to the south of the central tower rests on solid rock (now buried) whilst the northern half (to the right) is founded on the debris filling the *wādī* bed.

Figure 35. Monastery of Saint Catherine. Mosque. Photographic view of the interior.

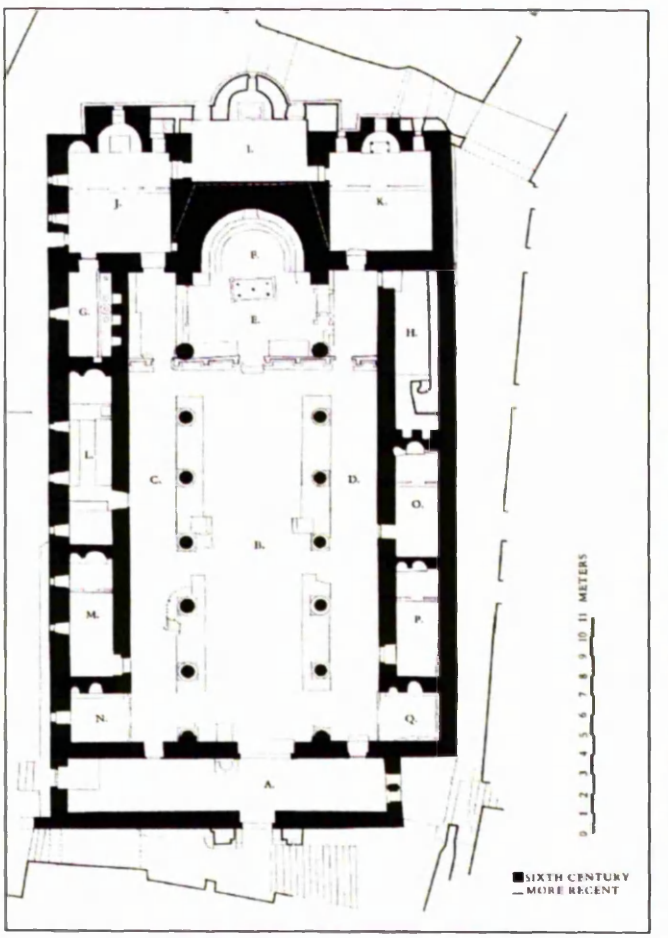
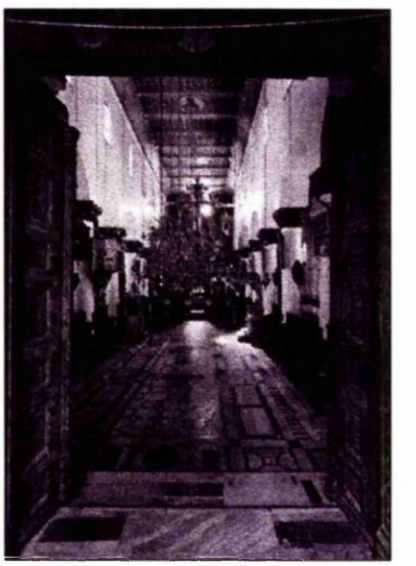


Figure 36 (left). Monastery of Saint Catherine. *Katholikon*. Ground-plan.
Sixth century structure in black, later additions in outline.

Figure 37 (bottom). Monastery of Saint Catherine. *Katholikon*. Photographic view of the nave, looking east.



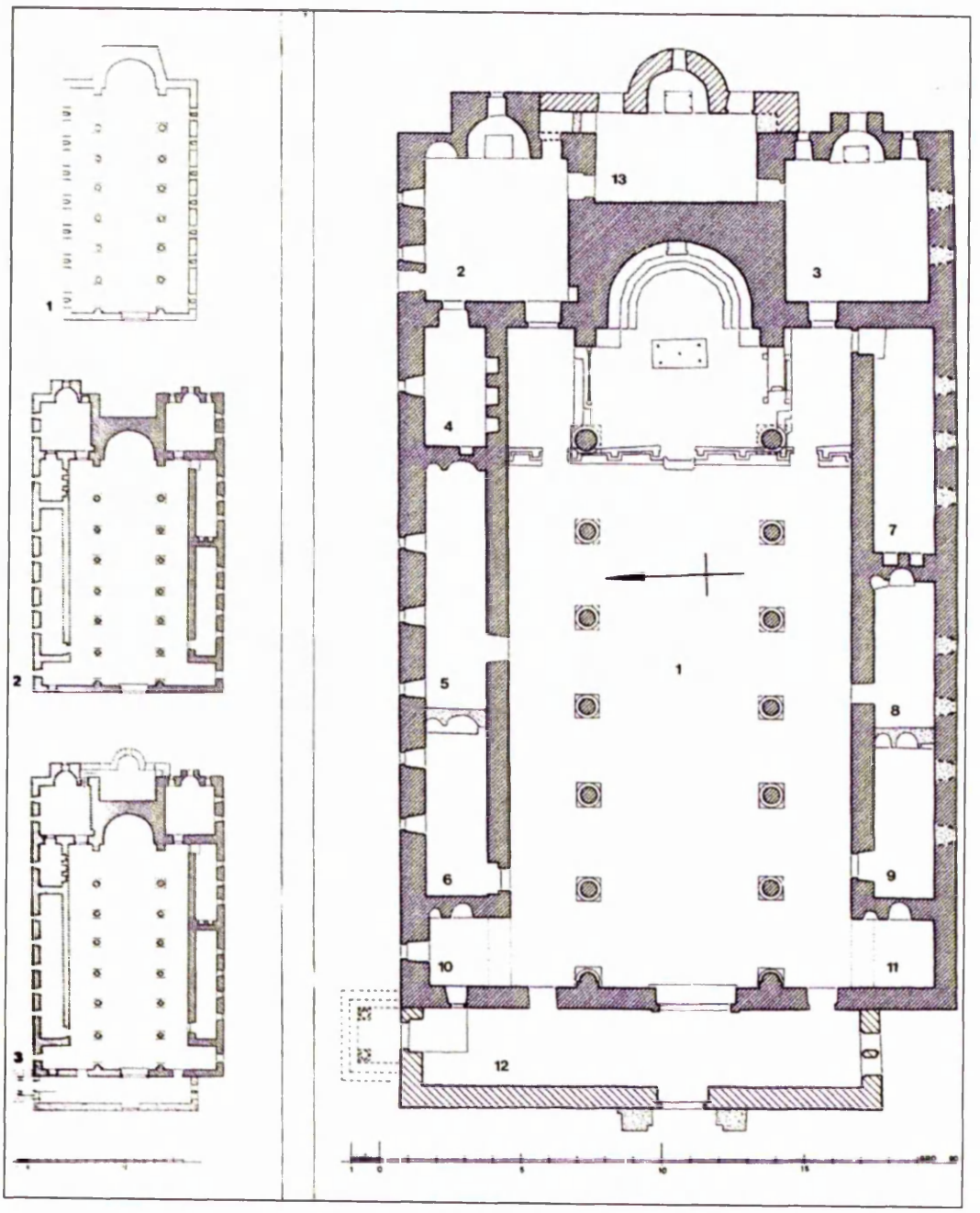


Figure 38. Monastery of Saint Catherine. *Katholikon*. Ground-plans at successive phases.
1: sixth century, 2: later sixth century, 3: early Islamic period (?), 4: eleventh century (?).

Figure 39 (left). Monastery of Saint Catherine. *Katholikon*. Wooden doors between the narthex and the nave, narthex side. Sixth century.

Figure 40 (bottom). Monastery of Saint Catherine. *Katholikon*. Photographic view of the marble floor of the nave from above. Eighteenth century.

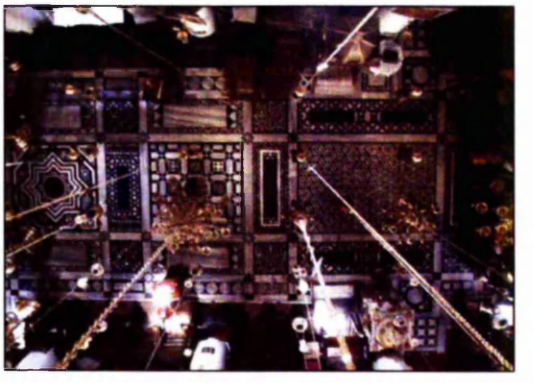


Figure 41 (left). Monastery of Saint Catherine. *Katholikon*. Photographic view of the apse and altar, from the northwest.
Marble wall cladding, mid-sixth century. Wall mosaic, second half of sixth century. Church furniture, seventeenth century.

Figure 42 (bottom). Monastery of Saint Catherine. *Katholikon*. *The Transfiguration of Christ*. Wall mosaic. Second half of sixth century.

Figure 43 (left). Monastery of Saint Catherine. *Katholikon. Moses and the Burning Bush, Moses receiving the Law, Angels and the Eucharist Lamb, John the Baptist* and *Virgin Mary*. Wall mosaic. Second half of sixth century.

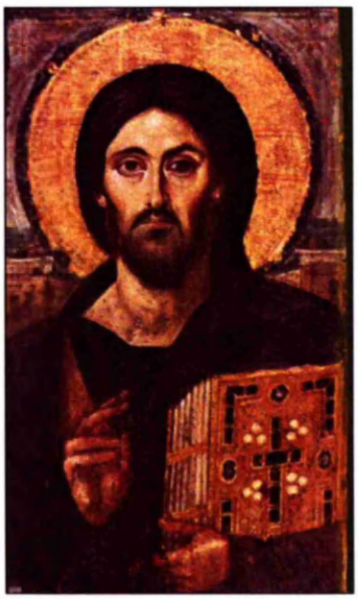


Figure 44 (top right). Monastery of Saint Catherine. *Christ Pantocrator*. Encaustic on wood, 84x45.5 cm. Sixth century.

Figure 45. Photographic view of the Monastery of Saint Catherine, *phylaktērion* (garrison station) and southern complex, from the northeast and above.

Figure 46. Photographic view of the south-eastern wing of the *phylaktērion* (garrison station) and the southern complex, from the northeast and above.

Figure 47 (right). Photographic view of the Monastery of Saint Catherine, the *phylaktērion* and the southern complex, from the south and above.

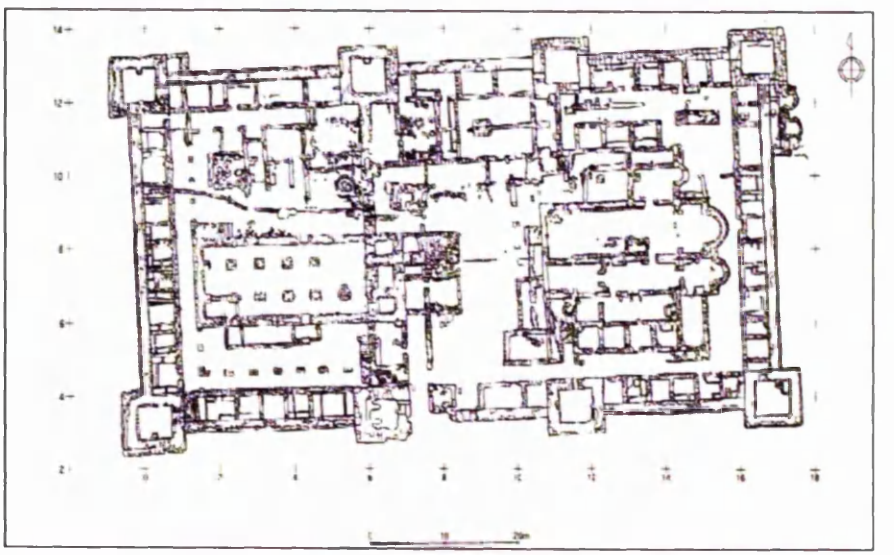


Figure 48. Raithō, Wādī al-Ṭūr. Monastery. Ground-plan.

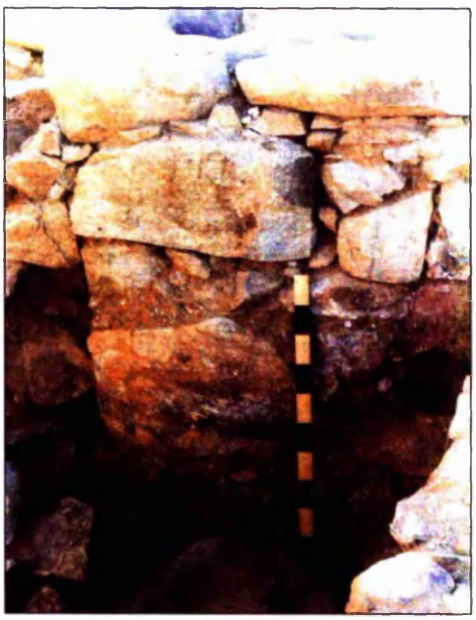


Figure 49 (left). Hagia Koryphē. Basilica. Photographic view of the southern stylobate, from the north.

Figure 50 (top). Hagia Koryphē. Basilica. *Crustae* for *opus sectile* flooring. Sandstone.

Figure 51. Hagia Koryphē. Basilica. Fragment from a cornice. Granite with fine lime plaster coating.

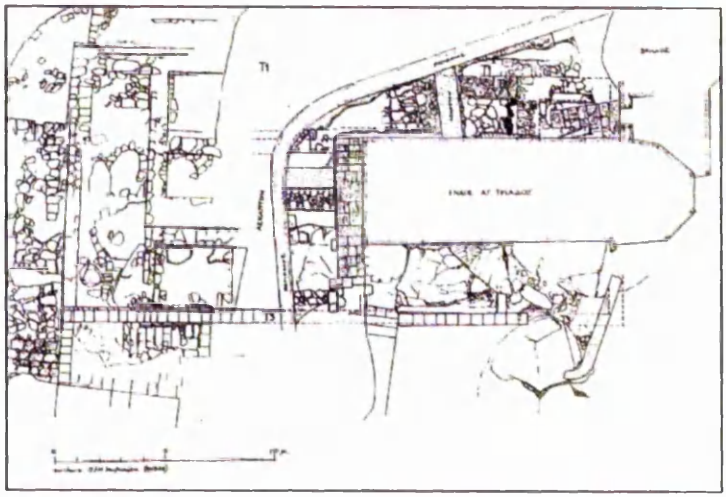


Figure 52. Hagia Koryphē. Basilica. Ground-plan.

Figure 53 (top). Hagia Koryphē. Basilica. Photographic view of the stone-built staircase and southern entrance to the narthex.
The seam between the southern aisle and the narthex walls is visible.

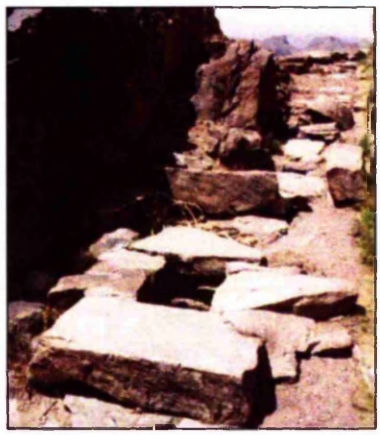


Figure 54 (right). Hagia Koryphē. Underground cistern at the base of the summit. Photographic view of the wellhead, from the south.

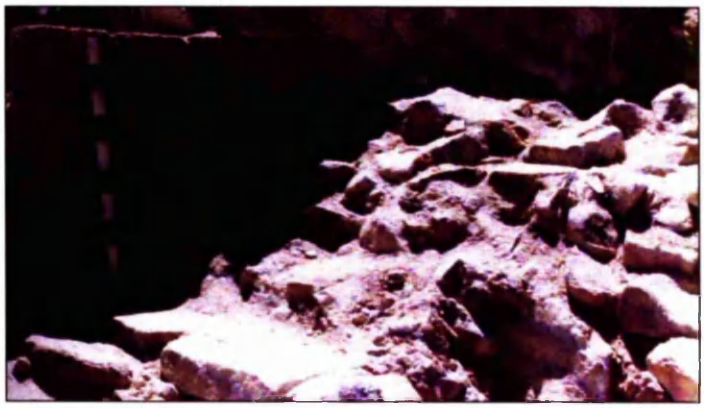
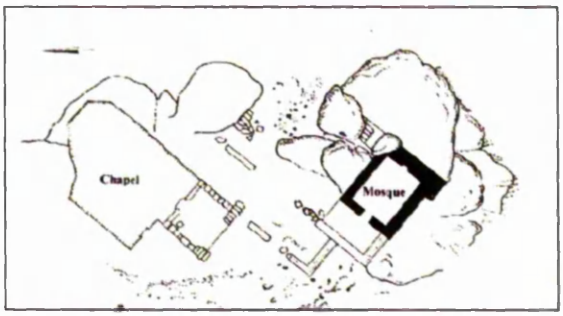
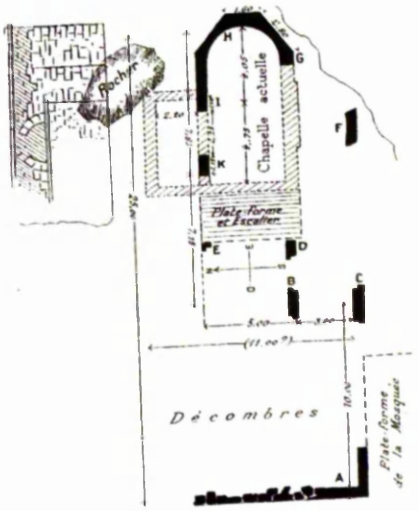


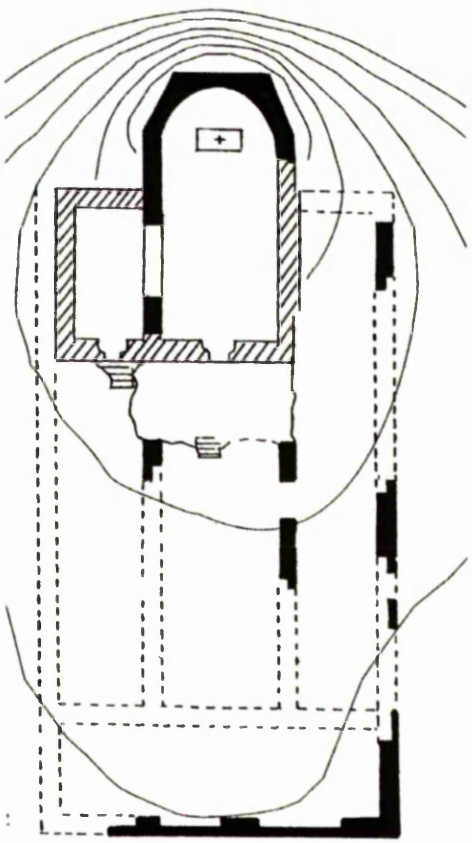
Figure 55 (top left). Hagia Koryphē. Basilica. Photographic view of the staircase within the narthex, from the northwest.

Figure 56 (top right). Hagia Koryphē. Basilica. Colonnette. Granite.

Figure 57 (bottom). Hagia Koryphē. Basilica. Keystone with inscription. Granite.







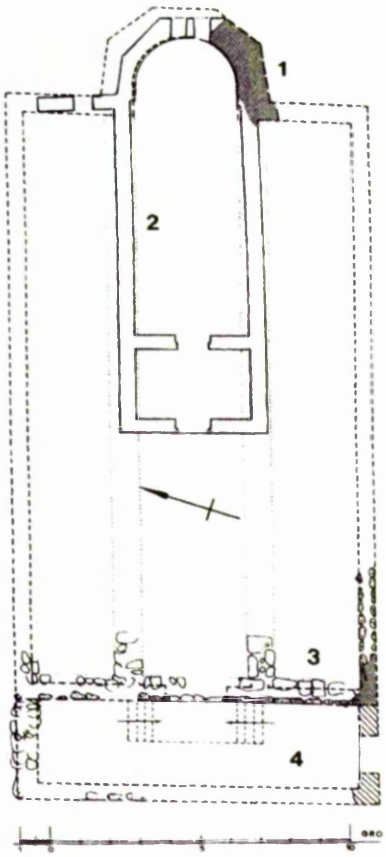


Figure 58 (top left). Hagia Koryphē. Ground-plan of the architectural remains in 1869.
Figure 59 (top right). Hagia Koryphē. Ground-plan of the architectural remains in 1897.
Figure 60 (bottom left). Hagia Koryphē. Basilica. Reconstructed ground-plan according to Barnabé Meistermann.
Figure 61 (bottom right). Hagia Koryphē. Basilica. Reconstructed ground-plan according to Peter Grossmann.

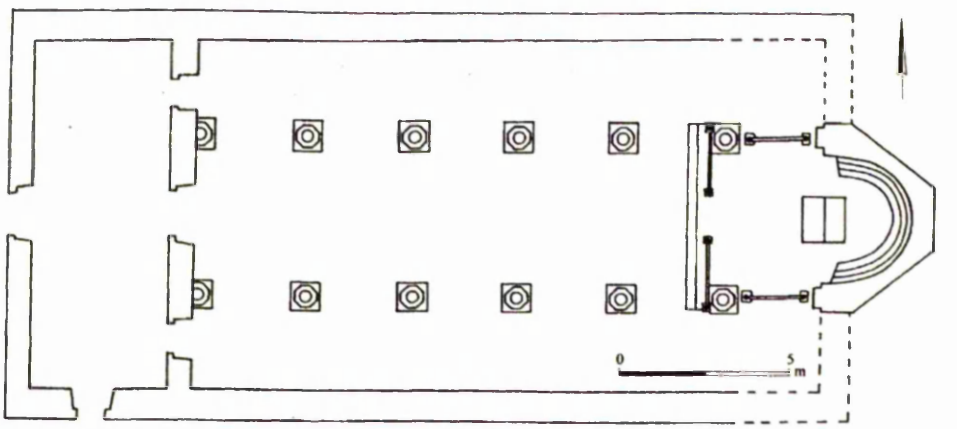


Figure 62 (top). Hagia Koryphē. Basilica. Reconstructed ground-plan according to Uzi Dahari.

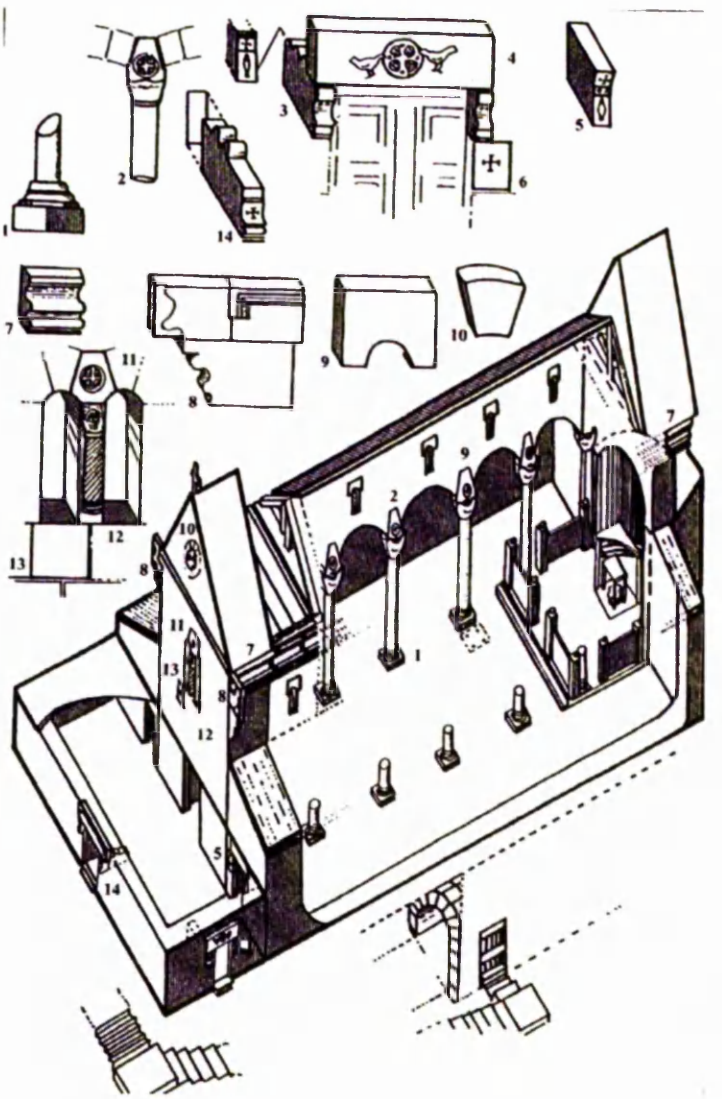


Figure 63 (left). Hagia Koryphē. Basilica and architectural members. Isometric reconstruction according to Uzi Dahari.

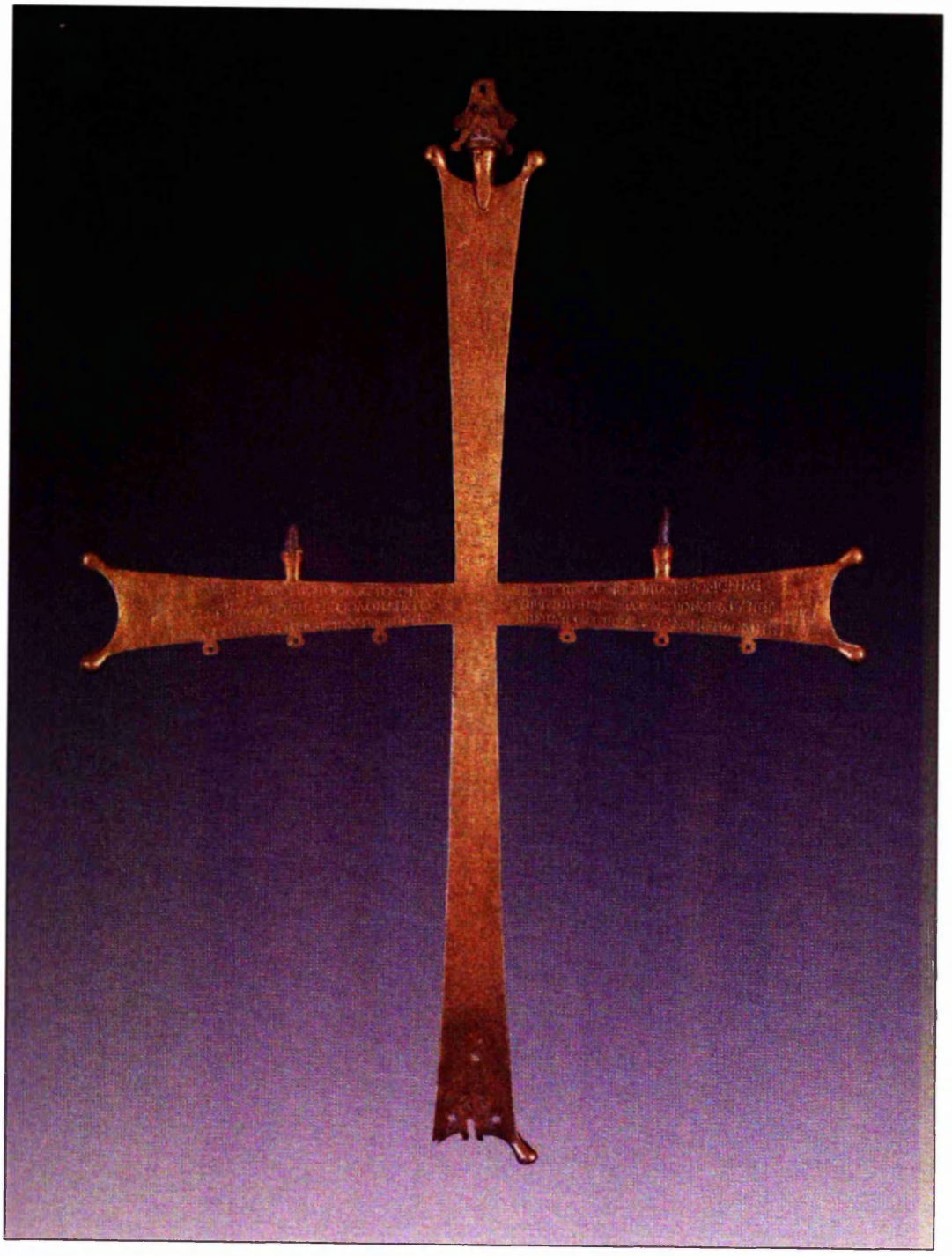


Figure 64. Monastery of Saint Catherine. 'Cross of Moses.' Bronze, height 104 cm. Sixth century.

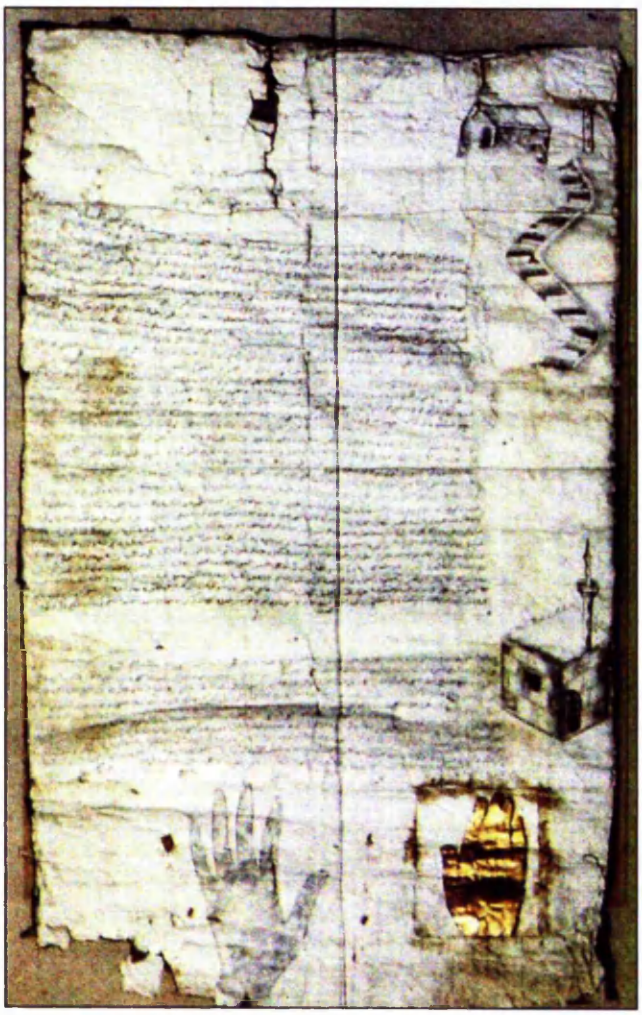


Figure 65. Monastery of Saint Catherine. 'Muḥammad's declaration.' Ink and gold leaf on paper. Late Ottoman period.

Figure 66. Hagia Koryphē. Cave A. Armenian inscriptions.

Figure 67. Hagia Koryphē. Cave A. Greek inscription. **(Text XLIX)**

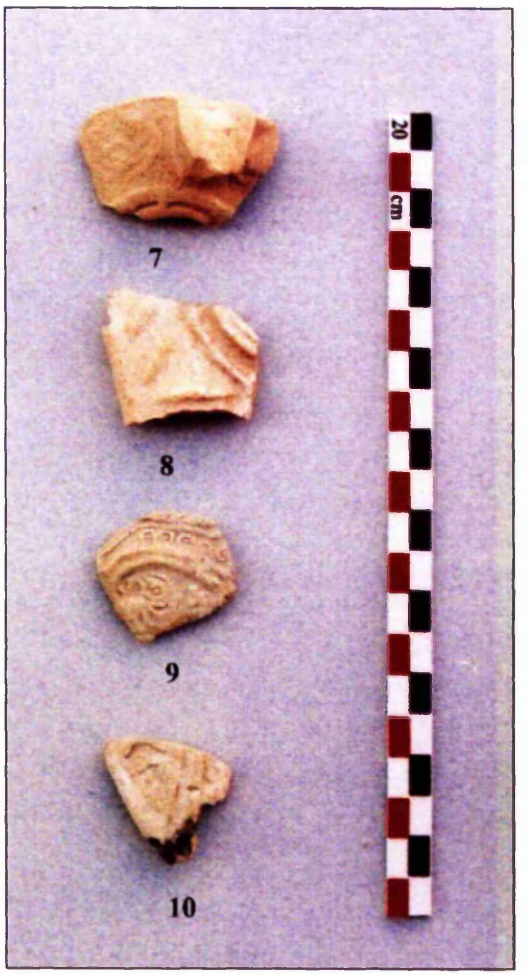


Figure 68 (bottom). Hagia Koryphē. Sherds of green glazed vessels.

Figure 69 (left). Hagia Koryphē. Fragments of clay lamps.

Figure 70. Monastery of Saint Catherine. *Saint Catherine, the Virgin of the Burning Bush and Moses*. Tempera and silver leaf on wood, 29x38 cm. Thirteenth century.

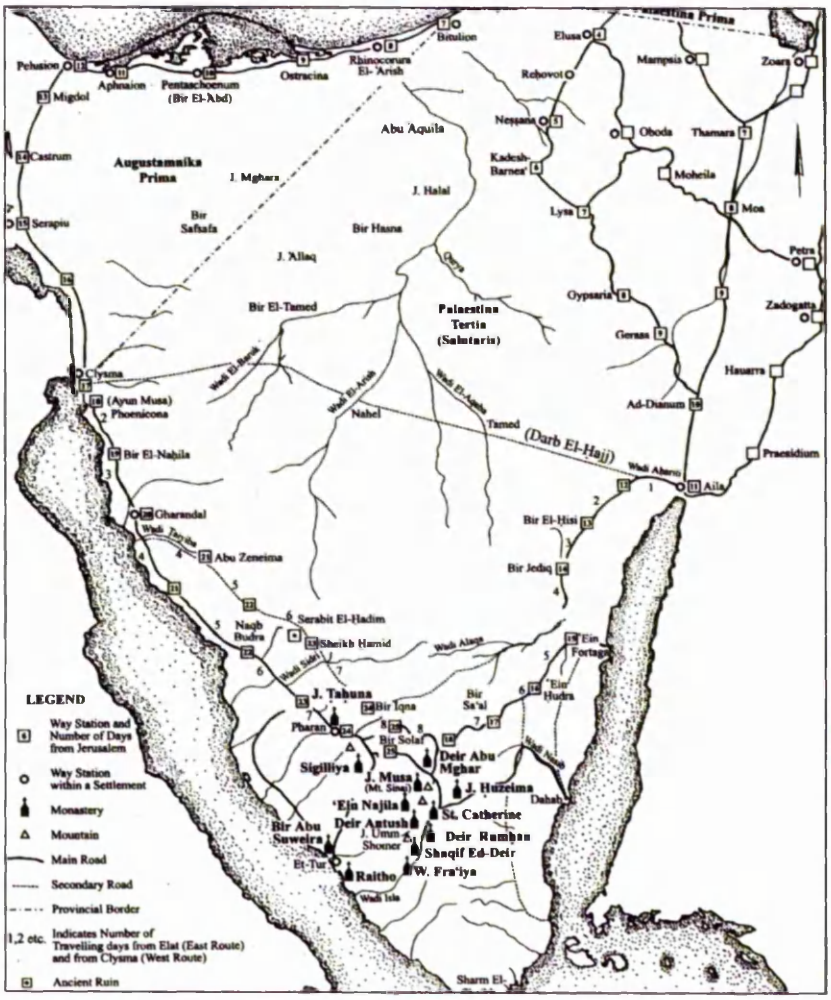


Figure 71. Sinai Peninsula. Map of pilgrimage routes towards the Horeb and Hagia Koryphē.

Figure 72. Monastery of Saint Catherine. Photographic view of the interior of the mosque. *Minbar* (right) and *kursi* (left). Carved wood, *minbar*: length 2.57 m, *kursi*: height 0.46 m. *Minbar*: dated by inscription to 1106, *kursi*: Fāṭimid period.

Figures 73 and 74. Monastery of Saint Catherine. *Kursi*, sides A (left) and B (right). Carved wood, height 0.46 m. Fāṭimid period.

Figures 75 and 76. Monastery of Saint Catherine. *Kursi*, sides C (left) and D (right). Carved wood, height 0.46 m. Fāṭimid period.

Figure 77. Monastery of Saint Catherine. *Kursi*. Carved wood, height 0.46 m. Fāṭimid period.

Figure 78. Monastery of Saint Catherine. *Minbar*. Carved wood, length 2.57 m. Dated by inscription to 1106.

Figure 79. Monastery of Saint Catherine. *Minbar*, inscription. **(Text LVI)** Carved wood. Dated by inscription to 1106.

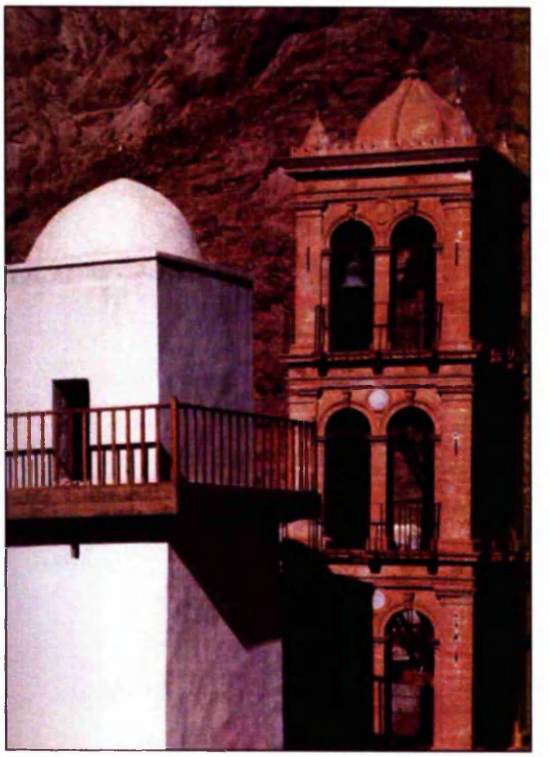


Figure 80. Monastery of Saint Catherine. Photographic view of the minaret and the belfry, from the northwest. Minaret: twelfth century, belfry: 1871.
The minaret is at the northeastern corner of the mosque.

Figure 81. Hagia Koryphē. Fragment of green glazed wheel-made lamp (restored). Exterior view.

Figure 82. Hagia Koryphē. Fragment of green glazed wheel-made lamp (restored). Interior view.

Figure 83. Hagia Koryphē. Fragments of green glazed wheel-made lamps.

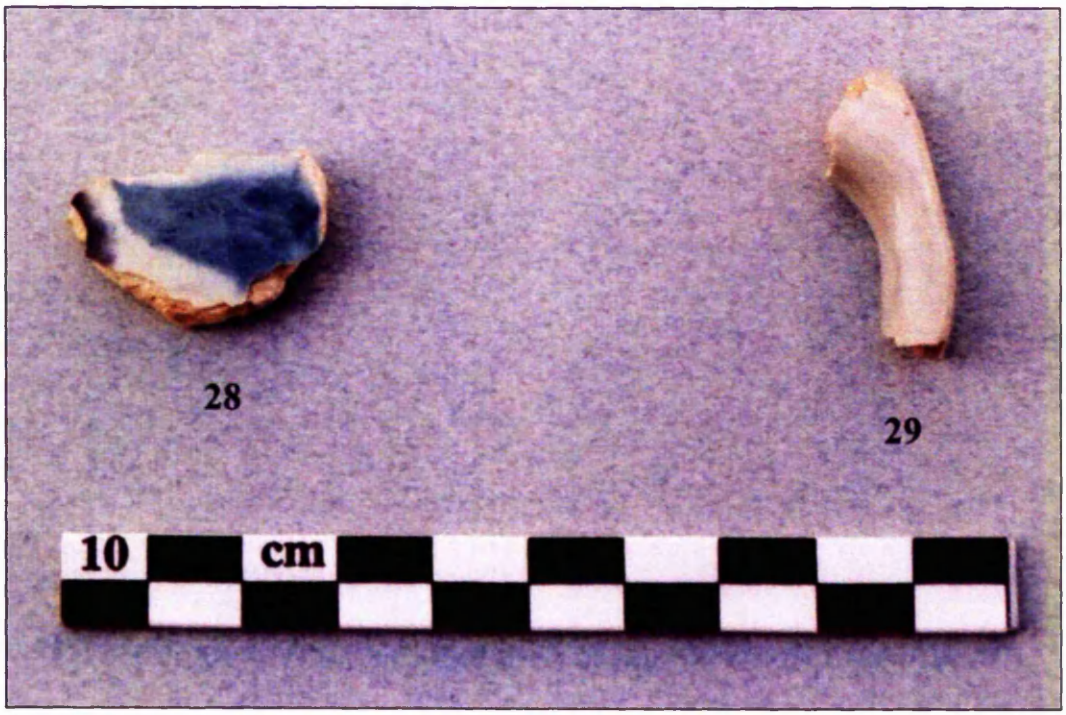


Figure 84. Hagia Koryphē. Fragments of a cobalt and manganese painted wheel-made lamp.

Figure 85. Jacopo da Verona (?), *The holy places on the Horeb and Hagia Aikaterinē. Circa* 1335.

Figure 86. Monastery of Saint Catherine. 'Crusader' Refectory. Wall paintings. Various dates. The paintings inside the arch date from the sixteenth century (1573, 1577). The recently uncovered spandrels were decorated in the thirteenth century and testify to an earlier, flat roof of the now arched building.

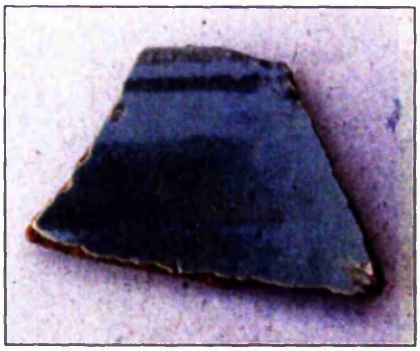
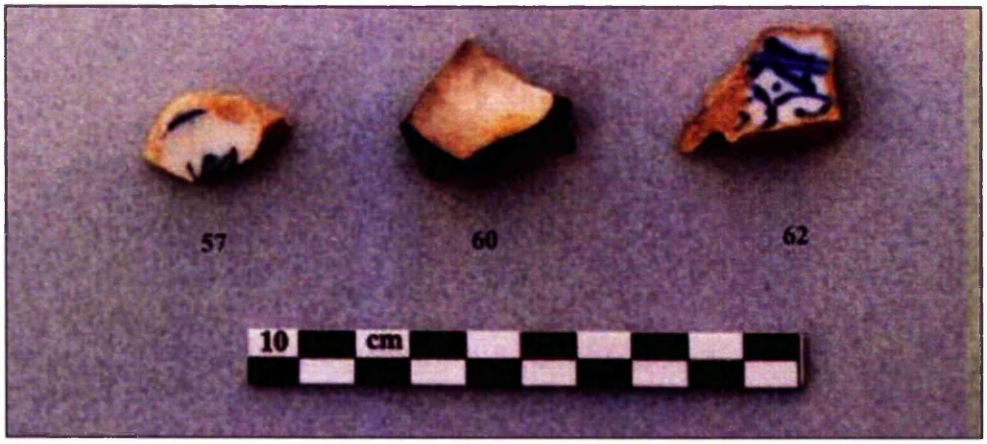


Figure 87 (left). Hagia Koryphē. Sherd of a celadon glazed vessel. Length 4 cm.

Figure 88 (bottom). Hagia Koryphē. Sherds of underglaze blue decorated fritware.



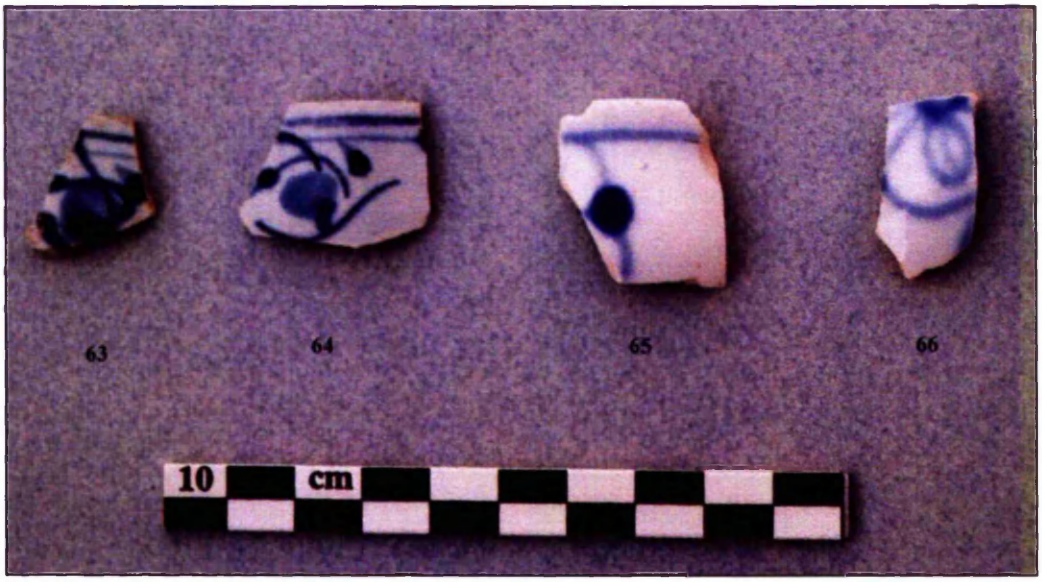


Figure 89. Hagia Koryphē. Sherds of blue-and-white Chinese porcelain.

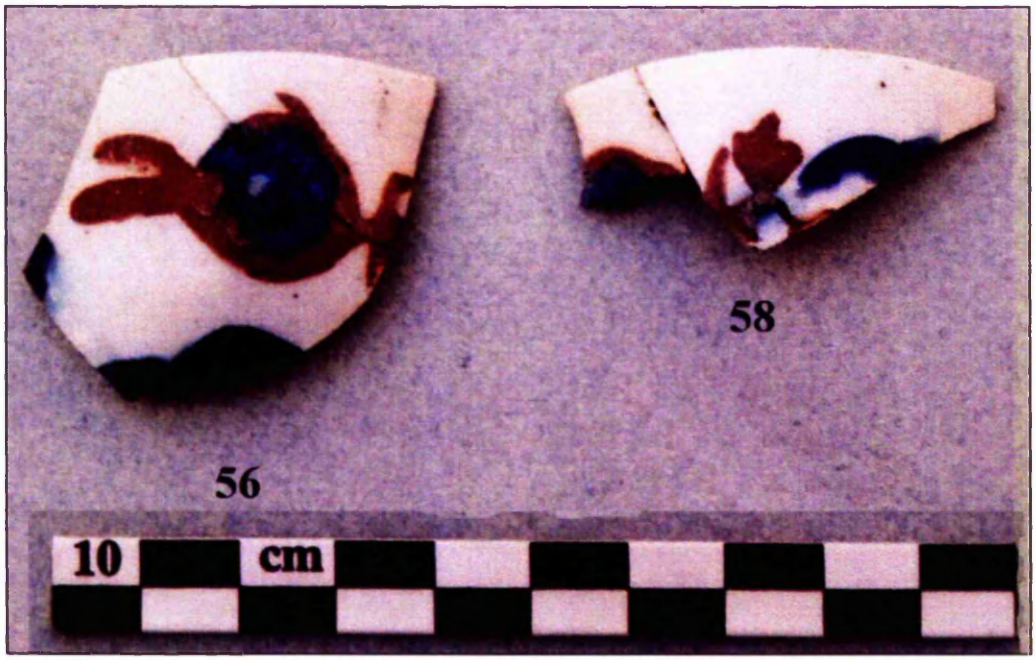


Figure 90. Hagia Koryphē. Sherds of Kütahya ware teacups.

Figure 91. Hagia Koryphē. Sherds of various teacups with overglaze enamel decoration. European factories. Exterior view.

Figure 92. Hagia Koryphē. Sherds of various teacups with overglaze enamel and underglaze decoration. European factories. Interior view.

Figure 93. Monastery of Saint Catherine. '*Aquamanile*,' vessel in the shape of a raptor. Bronze. ʿAbbāsid period, ninth or tenth century.

Figure 94 (top). A. Stumpf (Swiss), *Johann Ludwig Burckhardt*. Oil on wood. Twentieth century.

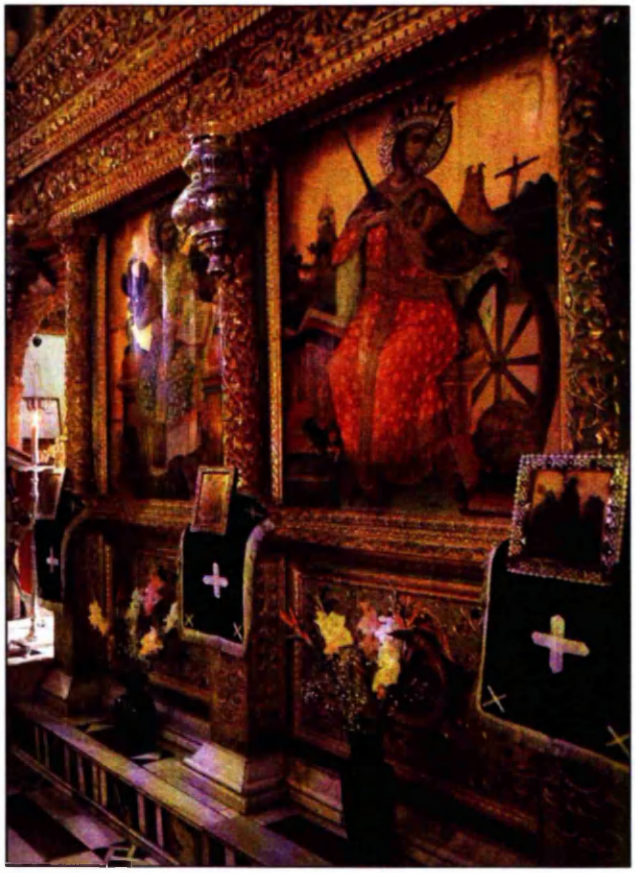


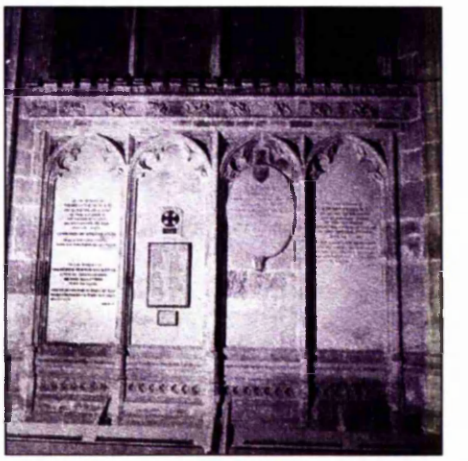
Figure 95 (right). Monastery of Saint Catherine. *Katholikon*. Altar screen with icons: *Christ Pantocrator* (left), *Saint Catherine* (right). Screen: gilt wood, icons: tempera on wood. Early seventeenth century.

Figure 96 (top). *Sigmund Feyerabend*. Engraving on paper. 1854.

Figure 97 (right). Cornelius Bloemart (Dutch, 1603-1680?), *Athanasius Kircher*. Engraving on paper. 1664.

Figure 98 (left). Jean-Étienne Liotard (Swiss, 1702-1789), *Richard Pococke*. Oil on canvas, 2.02x1.34 m. *Circa* 1738.

Figure 99 (bottom). Bill Brandt (British, 1904-1983), *South west transept, Canterbury Cathedral, Kent*. Photograph. December 1941.
Memorial to Charles Forster visible on the left.



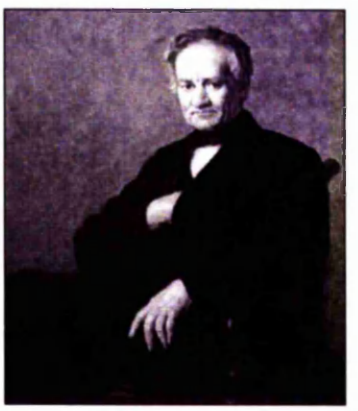


Figure 100. *Eduard Rüppell*. Engraving on paper.

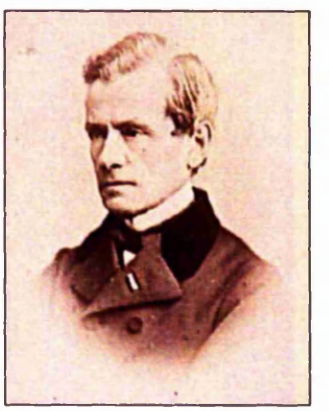


Figure 101. Charles Reutlinger (German working in France, 1816-after 1880), *Léon E. S. J., marquis de Laborde*. Photograph. Before 1869.

Figure 102. *Edward Henry Palmer*. Engraving on paper.

Figure 103 (left). *Archduke Otto Franz of Austria, with wife Princess Maria Josefa of Saxony and children.* Photograph. *Circa* 1900.

Figure 104 (right). *Jane Loftus marchioness of Ely.* Engraving on paper.

Figure 105. H. Penn (painter) and C. Cousen (British, 1803-1889, engraver), *Approach to Mount Serbal.* Steel engraving on paper. Mid-nineteenth century.

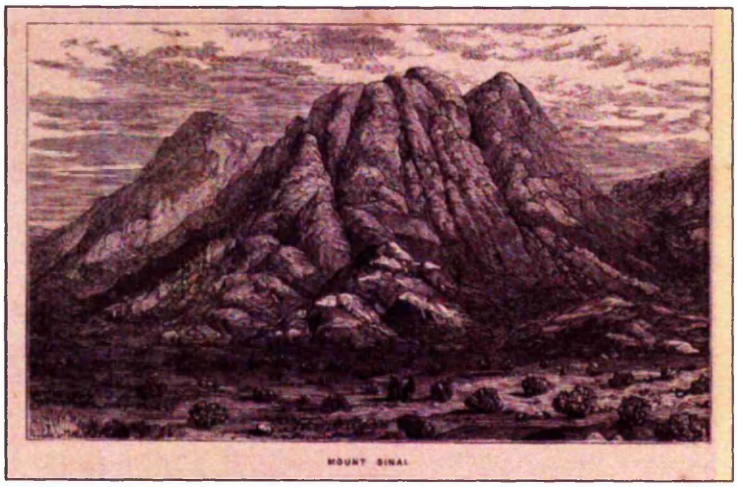


Figure 106. *Mount Sinai.* Engraving on paper. 1879. Hagia Zōnē appears on the foreground while Hagia Koryphē can be seen at the background, on the left.

Figure 107. Photographic view of Hagioi Theodōroi, from Hagia Koryphē.

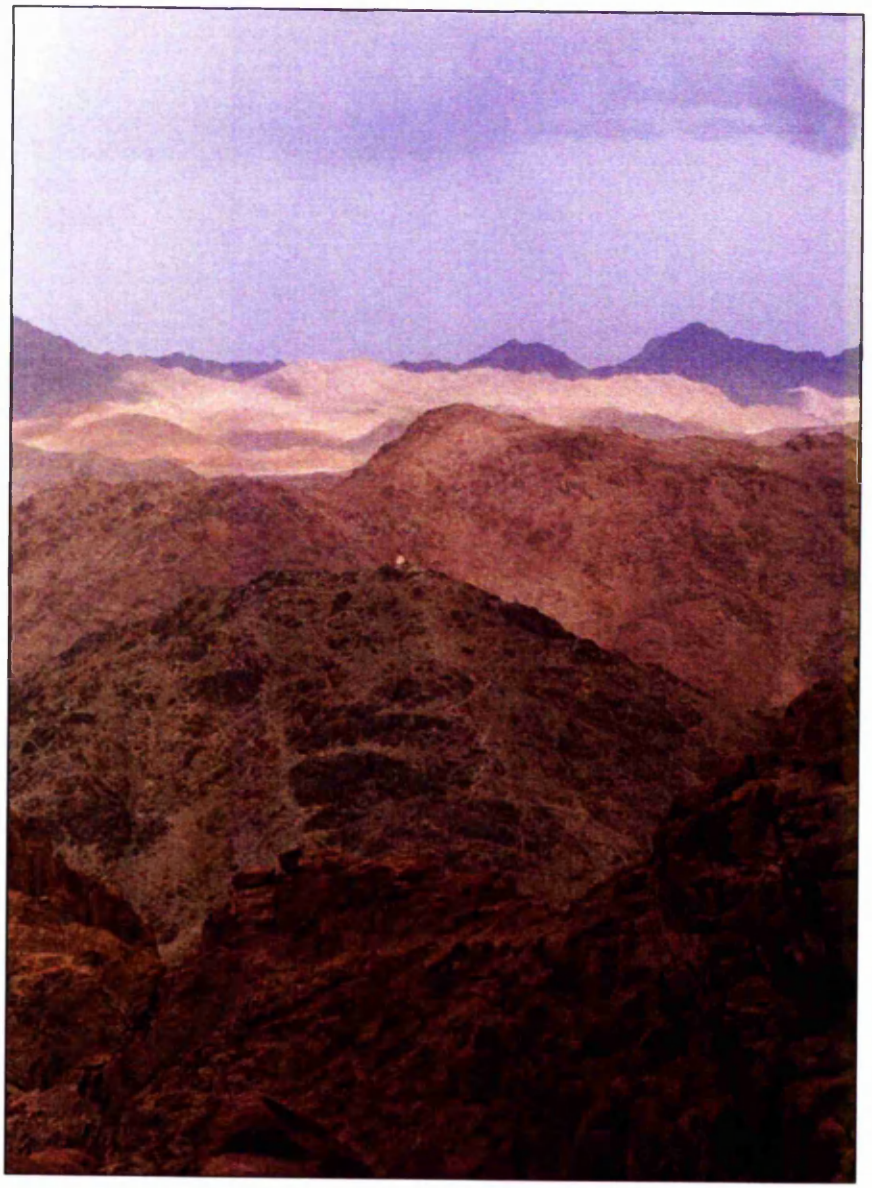


Figure 108. Photographic view of Hagia Aikaterinē, from Hagia Koryphē.

Figure 109. James MacDonald (British, 1822-1885), *Camp at Wadi ed Deir*. Albumen print. 1868.

Figure 110. James MacDonald (British, 1822-1885), *The party of the Ordnance Survey of the Peninsula of Sinai*. Albumen print. 1868.
From the left: Hasan and Salem (guides), Edward Henry Palmer (1840-1882), Henry Spencer Palmer (1838-1893), Charles William Wilson (1836-1905), Frederick Whitmore Holland and C. W. Wyatt.

Figure 111 (top). *General view of Mount Sinai.* Engraving on paper. Constantinople 1804.

Figure 112 (right). *General view of Mount Sinai.* Engraving on paper. Constantinople 1804.
Detail depicting the Horeb.

Figure 113. Monastery of Saint Catherine. Iakōvos Moskos, *The God Trodden Mount Sinai.* Tempera on wood, 28.6x39 cm. Early eighteenth century.

Figure 114. Monastery of Saint Catherine. *The Heavenly Ladder (Klimax)*. Tempera on wood, 41.1x29.5 cm. Twelfth century.
This icon was described by the British William Turner in August 1815, one of the earliest western visitors to show any appreciation of icon painting.

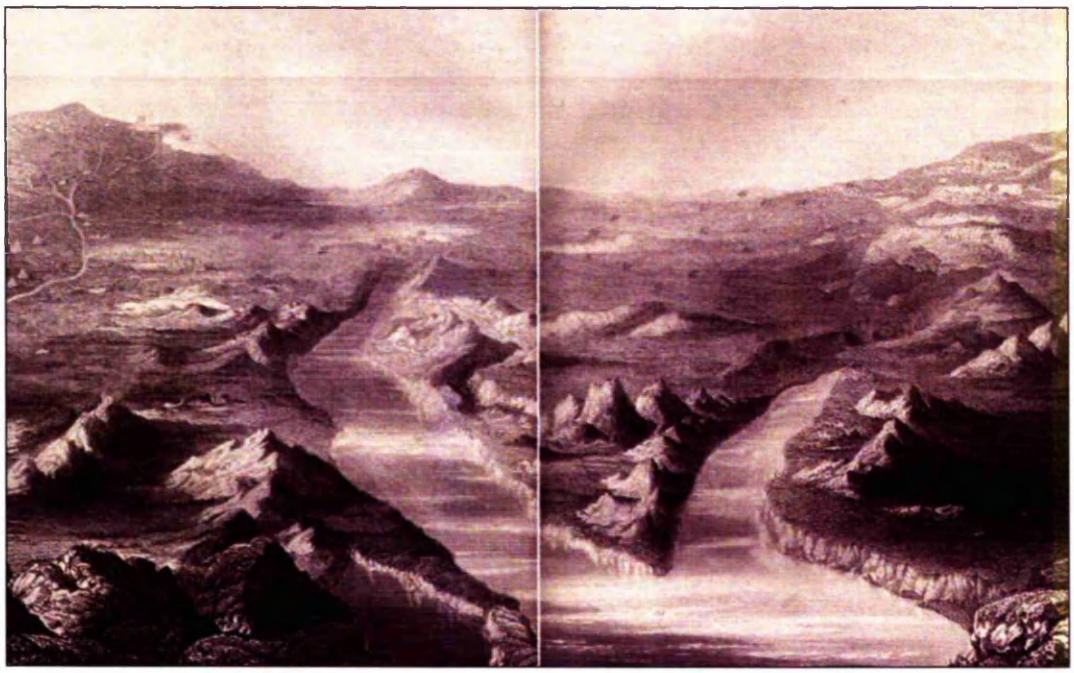
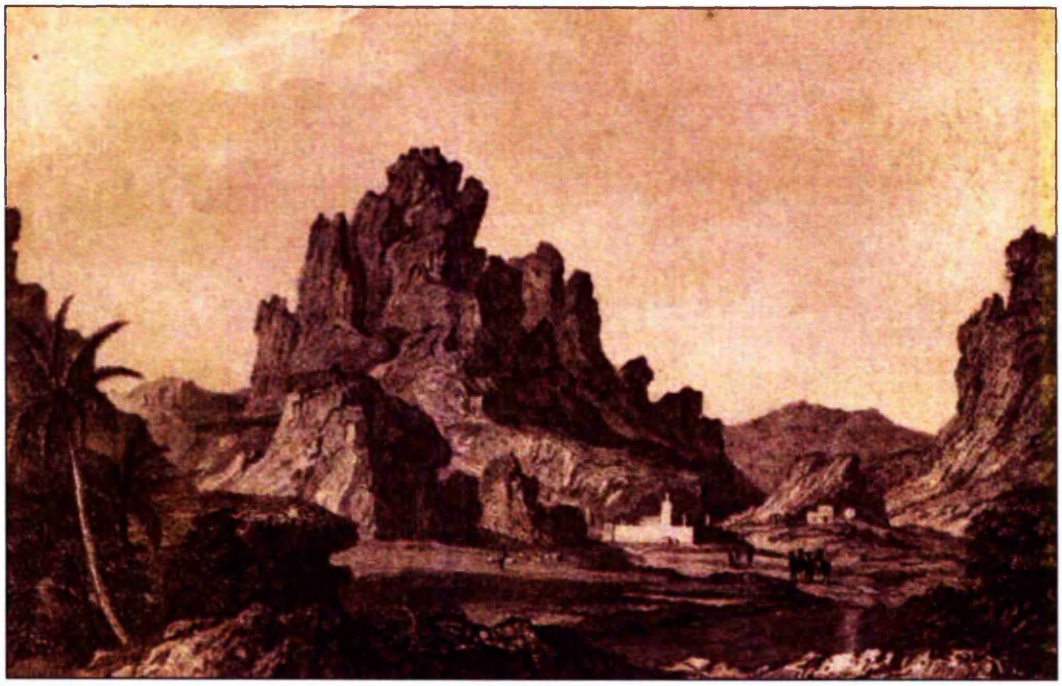


Figure 115 (top). W. Warwick (British, draughtsman and engraver), *Panorama of Lower Egypt, Arabia Petra, Edom and Palestine, shewing the Head of the Red Sea, the Isthmus of Sinai, the Route of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan...* Steel engraving on paper. Mid-nineteenth century.

Figure 116 (bottom). W. Westall (British, draughtsman) and J. Cuthwaite (British, engraver), *Mount Sinai*. Engraving on paper. Nineteenth century.



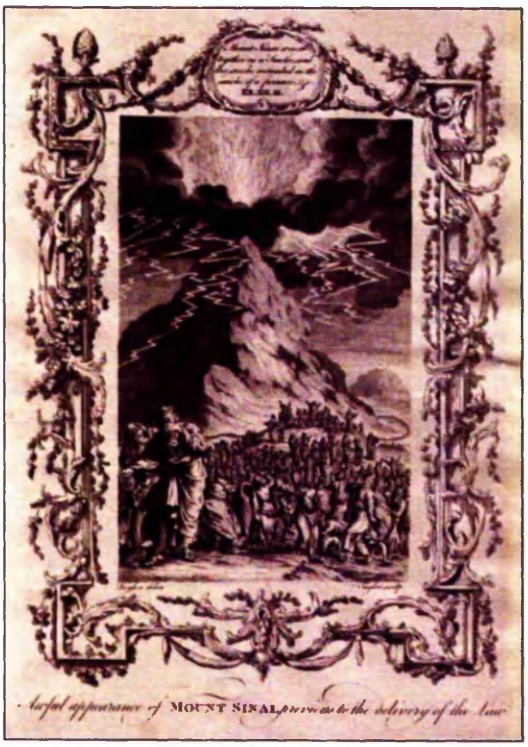


Figure 117 (left). Jan Luyken (Dutch, 1649-1712, draughtsman) and Jeremias Taylor (British?, engraver), *Awful Appearance of Mount Sinai, previous to the Delivery of the Law*. Copper engraving on paper. 1773.

Figure 118 (bottom). Frederick Catherwood (British, 1799-1854, draughtsman), James Duffield Harding (British, 1798-1863, draughtsman) and Edward Francis Finden (British, 1791-1857, engraver), *The Summit of Sinai*. Engraving on paper. 1836.

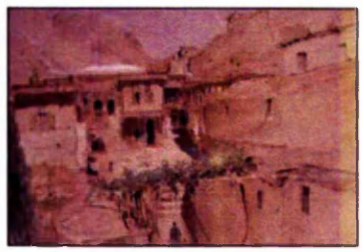


Figure 119 (top left). Edward Thomas Daniell (British, 1804-1842), *The Summit of Mount Sinai or Jebel Musa*. Watercolour on paper, 33.2x49.4 cm. 1841.

Figure 120 (top right). Edward Thomas Daniell (British, 1804-1842), *Interior of a Convent, Mount Sinai*. Watercolour on paper, 33.1x49.2 cm. 1841.

Figure 121 (bottom left). Francis Arundale (British, 1807-1853), *View from the top of Mt Sinai*. Engraving on paper. 1837.

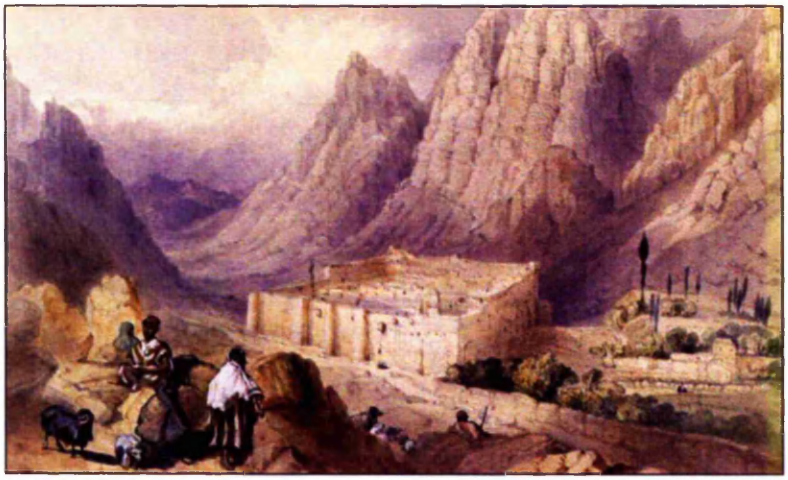


Figure 122. William Henry Bartlett (British, 1809-1854), *The Convent of St Catherine, Mount Sinai*. Watercolour on paper. 1845.

Figure 123 (left). David Roberts (British, 1796-1864), *Summit of Mount Sinai*... Lithograph on paper, detail. Based on a drawing executed in February 1839.

Figure 124 (bottom). Jean de Kergorlay (French), *Au sommet du Sinaï se voient les ruines d'une chapelle*. Photograph. Spring 1906.

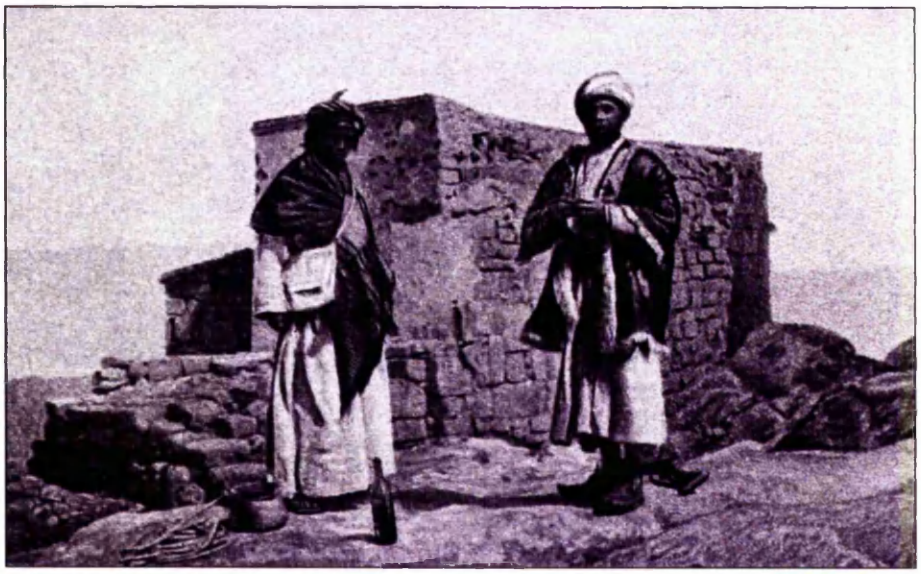


Figure 125 (left). David Roberts (British, 1796-1864). *Ascent to the Summit of Mount* Sinai. Lithograph on paper. Based on a drawing executed in February 1839.

Figure 126 (bottom). Jean de Kergorlay (French), *Une des portes sous lesquelles on passe pour gagner le sommet du Sinaï.* Photograph. Spring 1906.

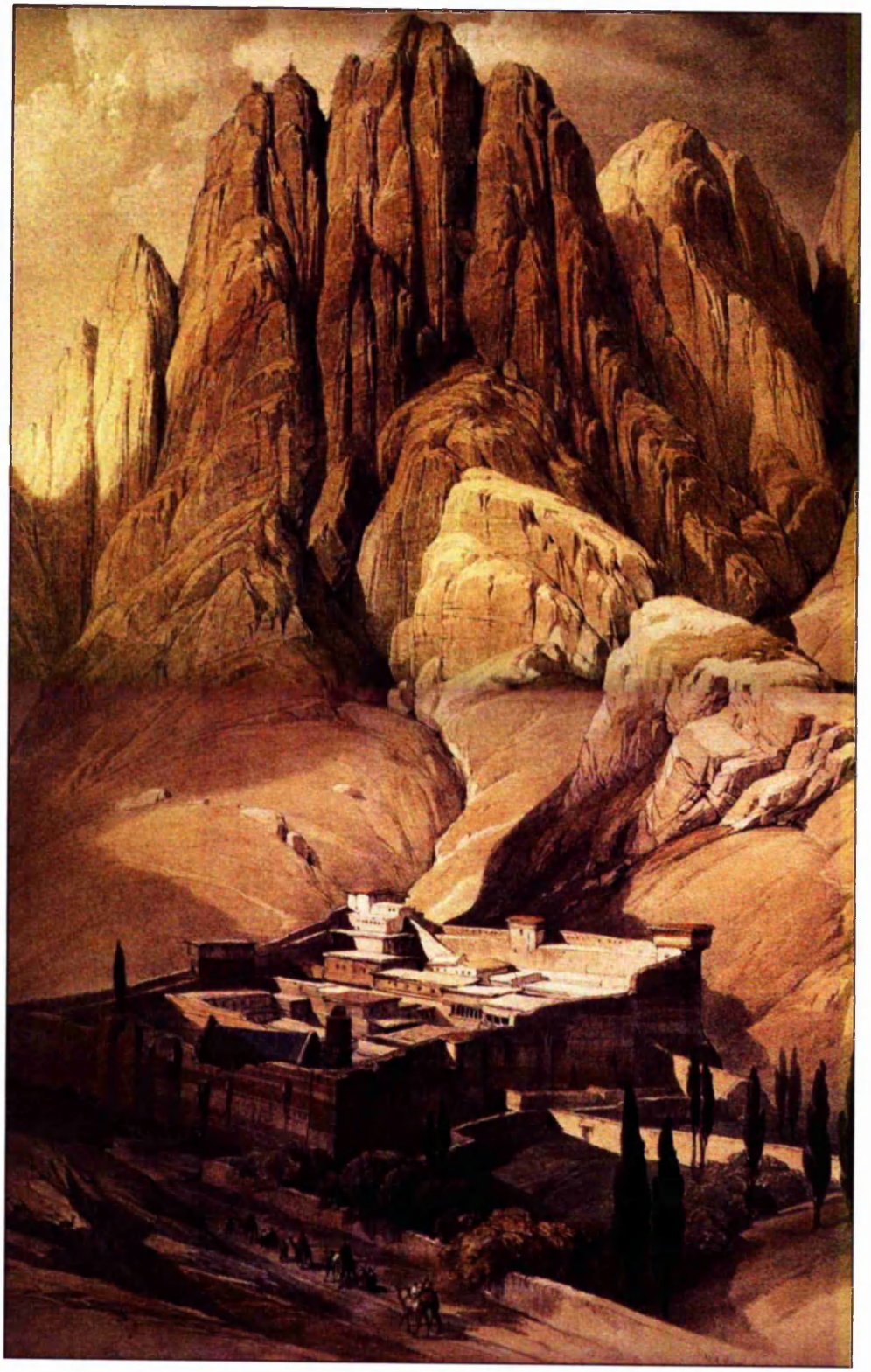


Figure 127. David Roberts (British, 1796-1864), *The Monastery of St. Catherine*. Lithograph on paper. Based on a drawing executed in February 1839.

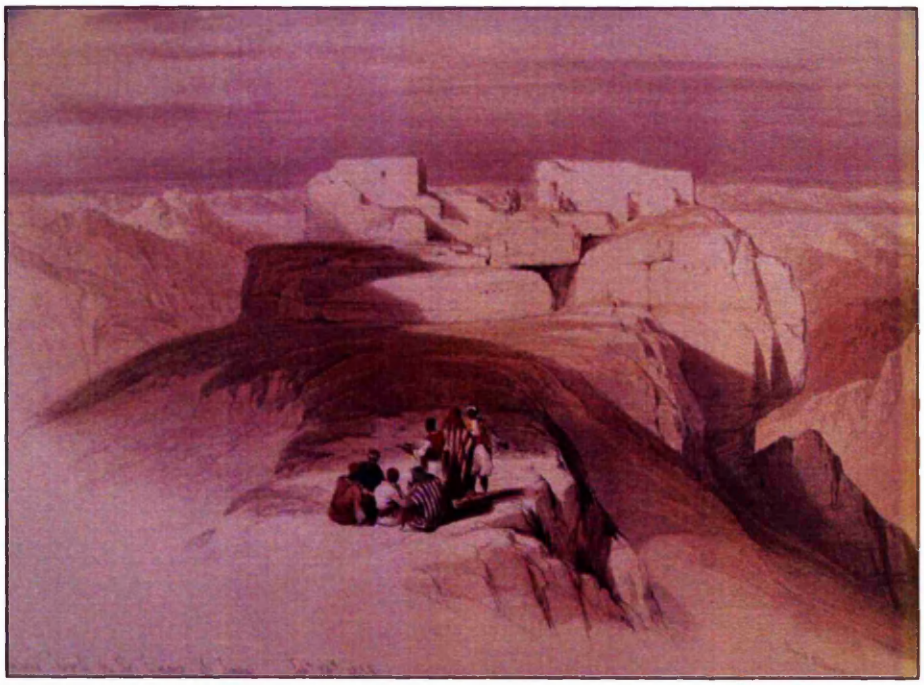


Figure 128. David Roberts (British, 1796-1864), *Summit of Mount Sinai shewing the Christian and Mahometan Chapels*. Lithograph on paper. Based on a drawing executed in February 1839.

> The text opposite the plate reads: 'Those Chapels are placed on what is traditionally regarded as the summit of Sinai, but the peak distinguished as Mount St. Catherine has a greater elevation. The ascent from the Convent employs about two hours, and the spectator is rewarded by a scene of the most striking magnificence. Around, beneath, and above, all is grandeur; he stands as in the Alps, in the midst of a region of Mountains; but with a feature of beauty wanting in the Alps – the expanse of a brilliant sea, a part of the Gulf of Akabah being in sight. The Chapels on the summit are in singular juxtaposition (Christian and Mahometan), apparently one structure (that on the right in the View is the Christian, the left the Mahometan); but both in a state of ruin from neglect and exposure to the storm. ....'

Figure 129. Adrien Dauzats (French, 1804-1868), *Le couvent de Sainte Catherine au Mont Sinai*. Oil on canvas, 1.30x1.04 m. *Circa* 1830.

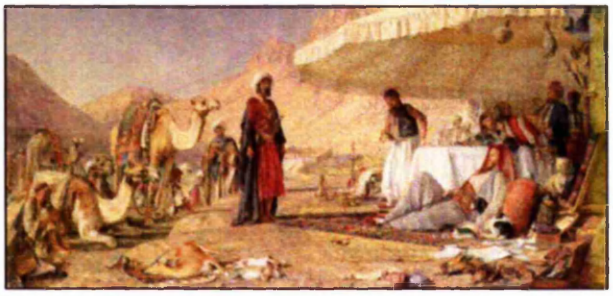
Figure 130. Miner Kilbourne Kellogg (American, 1814-1889), *The Top of Mount Sinai with the Chapel of Elijah*. Oil on linen, 72.4x49.5 cm. After 1844.

Figure 131 (left). Miner Kilbourne Kellogg (American, 1814-1889), *Convent of Elijah, Mt. Sinai*. Watercolour and pencil on paper, 45x29.1 cm. 1844.

Figure 132 (top). Miner Kilbourne Kellogg (American, 1814-1889), *Mount Horeb*. Pencil and charcoal on paper mounted on paper, 20.3x29.3 cm. Mid-nineteenth century.

Figure 133. Miner Kilbourne Kellogg (American, 1814-1889), *Mount Sinai and the Valley of Es-Seba'îyeh*. Oil on canvas. After 1865.

Figure 134. John Frederick Lewis (British, 1805-1876), *A Frank Encampment in the Desert of Mount Sinai, 1842 – The Convent of Saint Catherine in the distance*. Watercolour and gouache on paper, 64.8x 143.3 cm. 1856.



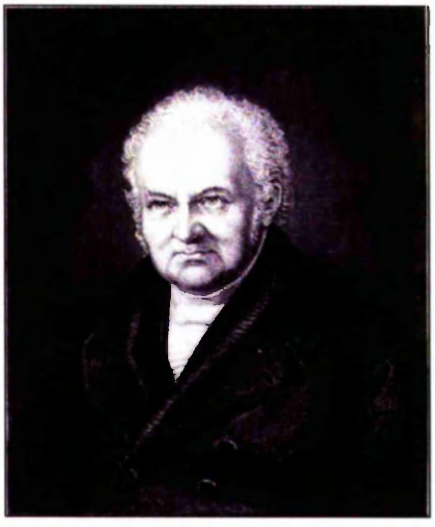
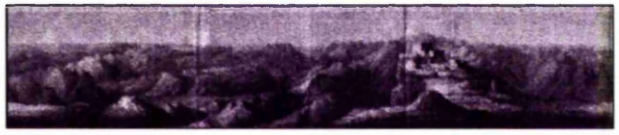


Figure 135 (left). *Gotthilf Heinrich von Schubert*. Engraving on paper.

Figure 136 (bottom and next page). Johann Martin Bernatz (German, 1802-1878), *Panorama vom Sinai*. Lithograph on paper. Based on drawings made in March 1837.



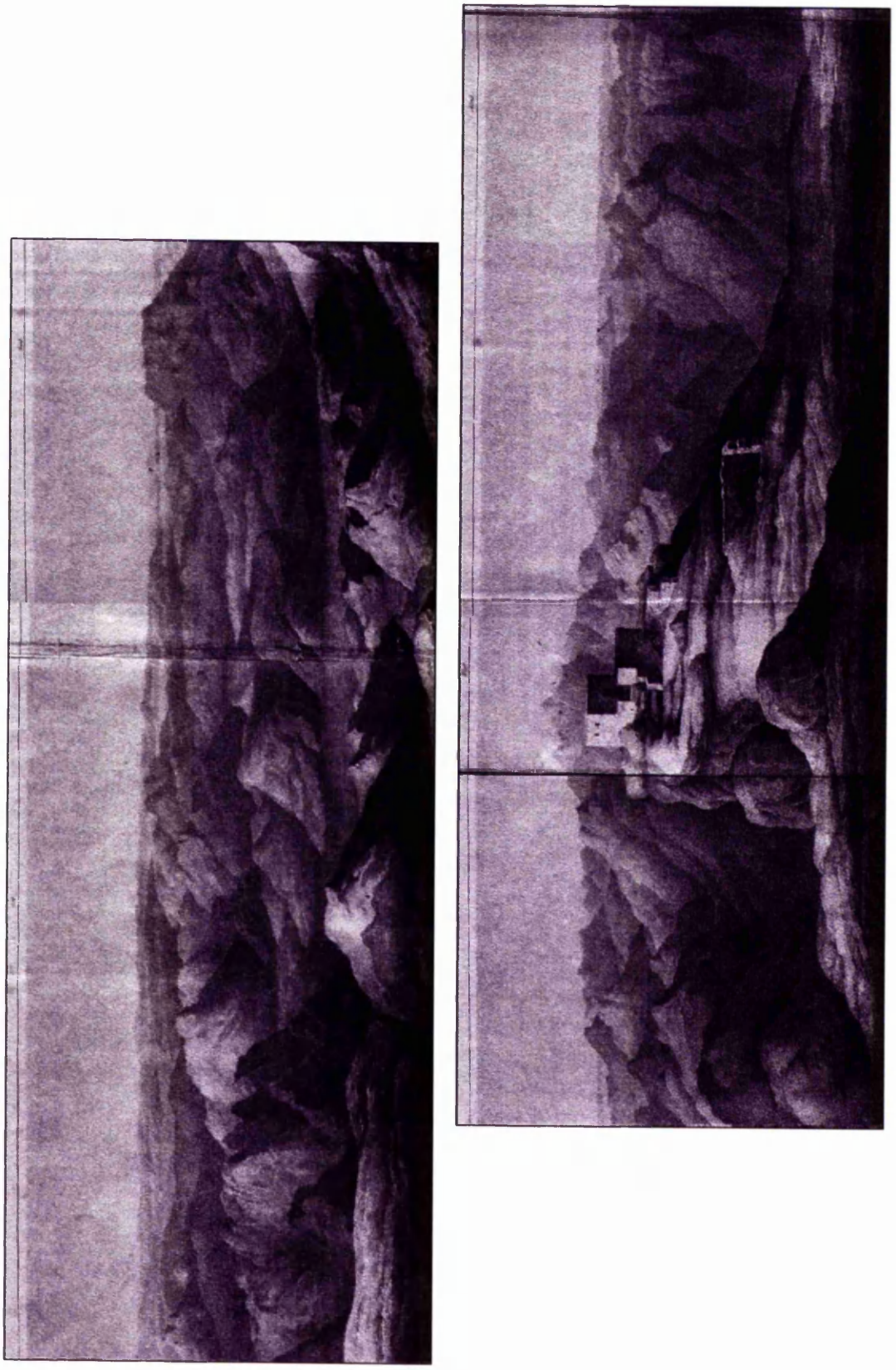


Figure 137. Hagia Koryphē. Photographic view of the mosque, from the northeast.

Figure 138. Francis Frith (British, 1822-1898), *Mount Serbál, from the Wádee Feyrán*. Albumen print. 1856-1857.

Figure 139. Francis Frith (British, 1822-1898), *The Convent of Sinai and Plain of Er-Ráhà*. Albumen print. 1856-1857.

Figure 140. Francis Frith (British, 1822-1898), *Mount Horeb, Sinai.* Albumen print. 1856-1857.

Figure 141. Francis Frith (British, 1822-1898), *The Summit of Gebel Moosà Sinai.* Albumen print. 1856-1857.

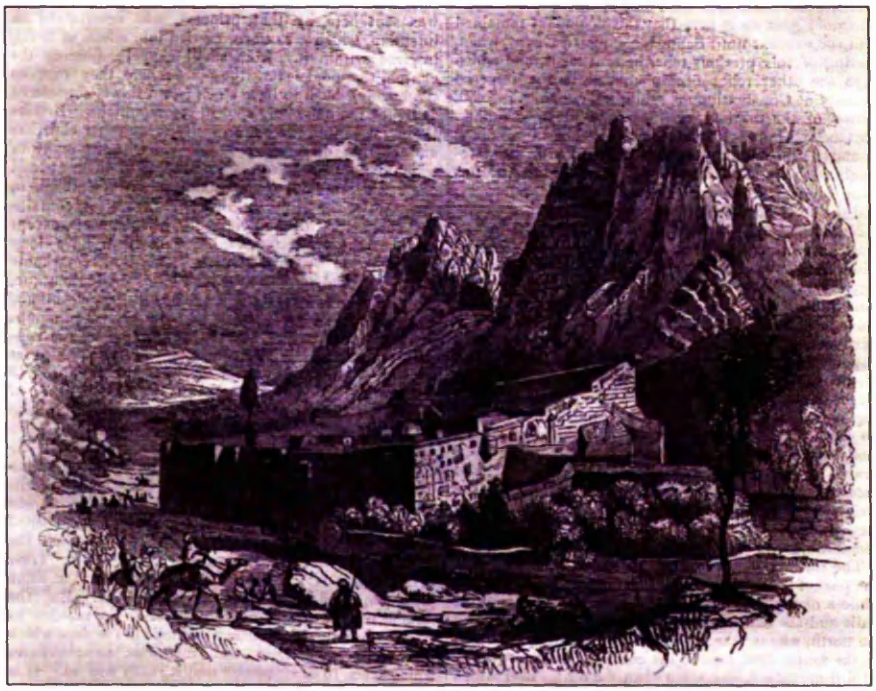


Figure 142. *Mounts Sinai and Horeb, with the Convent of St. Catherine, from the North.* Engraving on paper. 1835.

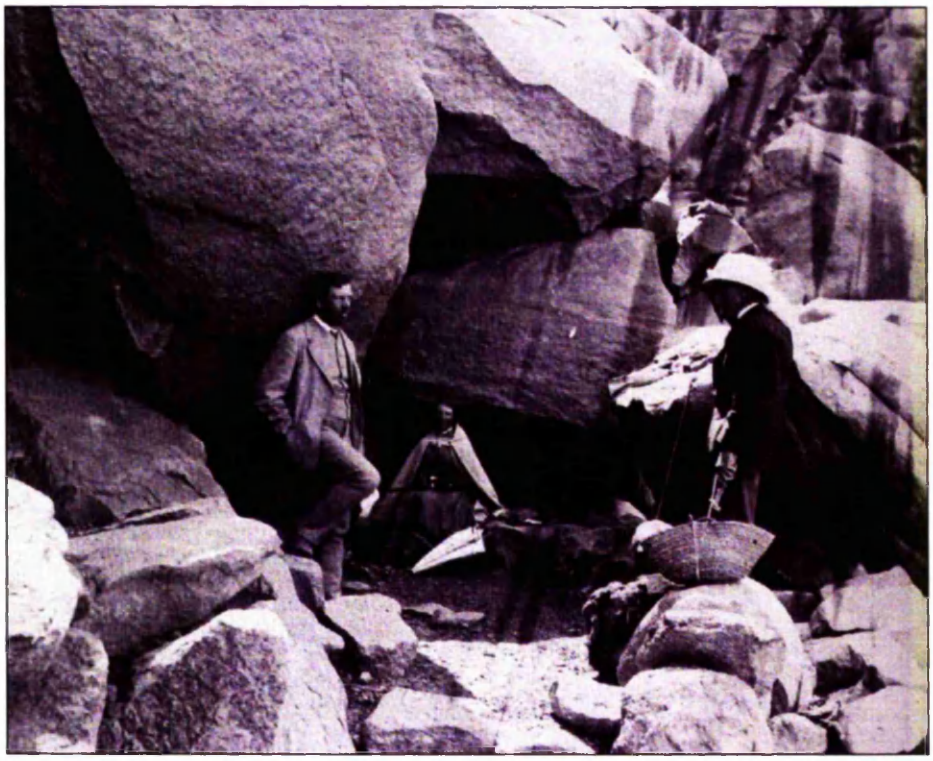


Figure 143. James MacDonald (British, 1822-1885), *Visitors at the foot of Hagia Koryphē.* Albumen print. 1868-1869.

Figure 144 (left). Hagia Koryphē. Sherds of transfer-printed stoneware. England.
75, 76, 77: Flatware decorated in a 'seaweed' pattern.
78: Flatware decorated in the 'willow pattern.'
79: Unidentified pattern.

Figure 145 (right). Hagia Koryphē. Transfer-printed 'Etruscan' shape stoneware cup (restored). England.

Figure 146. Transfer-printed stoneware cup with the 'Horeb' pattern. England.

Figure 147. *Les montagnes de Sinaï. Sinaigebirge.* Postcard. Sent on 23 December 1906.

Figure 148. *The People Receiving the Law at Sinai.* Print. Twentieth century.